

JOE BIDEN IN MEXICO FOR TALKS

MEXICO CITY (AP) — U.S. Vice President Joe Biden told Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Friday that he wants to deepen relations between the neighboring countries beyond drugs, security and immigration.



Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto and U.S. Vice President Joe Biden shake hands in Mexico City, Friday, Sept. 20, 2013.
(AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)

Launching the High Level Economic Dialogue to boost trade and investment ties, Biden urged the two countries to develop a stronger economic partnership that can move "more people, goods and information across our border." "We have a billion dollars a day in trade. Is there any businessman or woman here who can't rationally picture in 10 years that being \$2 billion?" Biden asked at the Foreign Ministry before he met with the president. "We cannot settle for business as usual." Biden later talked with Peña Nieto about expanding trade between the countries by improving border crossing infrastructure and keeping international bridges open longer hours so more goods can move across.

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SHUTDOWN SHOWDOWN BACK AGAIN

President Barack Obama gestures as he speaks to workers at the Ford Kansas City Stamping Plant in Liberty, MO., Friday, Sept. 20, 2013. Obama traveled to the Kansas City area to visit the Ford automotive plant to highlight the progress in the economy since the 2008 financial crisis.

(AP Photo/Orlin Wagner)

House Passes Spending Bill, Obama Offers Rebuke

JONATHAN WEISMAN

ASHLEY PARKER

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WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama offered a sharp rebuke of congressional Republicans on Friday, just hours after the GOP-controlled House passed a spending resolution that cut all funding for his health care reform law and increased the specter of a government shutdown. "They're focused on trying to mess with me," Obama said, speaking at a Ford manufacturing plant in Liberty, Mo., before a crowd that included union workers and Democratic elected officials. "They're not focused on you."

In a searing criticism of lawmakers who are threatening to refuse to raise the debt ceiling next month, which would cause the United States to default on its debts, Obama called the potential action "profoundly destructive." If it happens, he said, "America becomes a deadbeat." The 230-189 vote on Friday set up another bitter fiscal showdown just 10 days before much of the federal government is set to run out of money. The outcome is anything but clear. Two Democrats voted for the measure, and one Republican voted against it. With no resolution, large parts of the government

could shut down Oct. 1, and the nation's first default on federal debt could follow weeks later. "We had a victory today for the American people, and frankly, we also had a victory for common sense," House Speaker John A. Boehner said after the vote. He added, "Our message to the United States Senate is real simple: The American people don't want the government shut-down and they don't want Obamacare." Obama reiterated that he would not negotiate over the health care law, the Affordable Care Act, and warned of the real consequences if a budget resolution was not

reached or if Congress refused to increase the Treasury's borrowing limit. "This is not abstract," Obama said. "Hundreds of thousands of Americans will not be allowed to go to work. Our men and women in uniform, even those deployed overseas, won't get their paychecks on time." The event was part of Obama's broader push to highlight the strides that he said already have been made in turning around the economy, and to push for the creation of more opportunities for the middle class to thrive.

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Biden in Mexico to strengthen relations

Continued from Front

The meeting came just weeks after revelations that the National Security Agency had monitored Pena Nieto's emails before his 2012 election.

"There is no relationship that we value more, there is no economic relationship that we think holds the most promise and there is no part of the world that has the opportunity to do as much to generate economic growth over the next 20 or 30 years in the hemisphere," Biden said after the meeting.

Pena Nieto has been dealing with massive flooding in the southern state of Guerrero and street protests by teachers opposed to his education reforms.

Biden offered to provide assistance for storm recovery if Mexico asked for it. He said he was traveling next to see the flooding in Colorado.

The vice president also characterized Mexico's reforms as "historic changes," saying they would help the country "establish a new role in the 21st century." In educational cooperation, Biden said the two countries have great opportunities for increased academic and student exchanges and joint research.

Pena Nieto said he set a goal with Biden for 100,000 Mexican students go study in the U.S. and 50,000 U.S. students study in Mexico.

"Vice President Biden's visit in Mexico reaffirms our government's common vi-

sion and the interest we have in making our region of North America stronger, more solid and consolidated," said Pena Nieto.

Before his meeting with Mexico's leader, Biden referred to the recent marches by protesting teachers that have choked Mexico City streets, and quipped that he thought the masses had assembled to welcome him.

"I was disappointed when I found out that the 15,000

transportation and the U.S. trade representative.

President Barack Obama announced the bilateral economic dialogue in a visit to Mexico in May.

According to the White House, the annual Cabinet-level meetings are designed to promote mutual growth, job creation and economic competitiveness. "I have personally at the request of the president focused on the Middle East, Syria and

international affairs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, participated in Friday's dialogue on the role of the private sector.

He agrees that the two countries should have a bilateral approach to infrastructure and investment.

"Let's make the border seamless. ... the technology exists," he said.

"It's just a question of getting the two governments to implement something."

The challenge, he said, is



Vice President Joe Biden, left, waves accompanied by Mexico's President Enrique Pena Nieto after delivering a message to the press at the Los Pinos Presidential residence in Mexico City, Friday, Sept. 20, 2013.

(AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)

out there weren't hollering 'Biden, Biden,'" he said.

Biden met with Mexico's secretaries of finance, foreign affairs, tourism, economy and education.

He is traveling with the U.S. secretaries of commerce, homeland security and

events in that region.

But the president made clear to me, and as they say he was pushing on an open door, that no matter what occupies us immediately, it is important for us to be here," Biden said.

Myron Brilliant, head of in-

keeping the governments focused on building closer economic ties and producing results.

"After all, the president is a little distracted in Washington by the debt ceiling, fiscal issues, crises in the Middle East. □

Israel probing claim French diplomat roughed up

IAN DEITCH

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel is probing allegations that a French diplomat was roughed up by Israeli soldiers at a West Bank protest and says it might file a complaint over her involvement.

Human Rights Watch cited witnesses as saying that Marion Castaing, was taken out of a truck and thrown to the ground. He said she was among European dip-

lomats accompanying the group as it delivered tents to Bedouin whose shacks had been demolished.

Bedouins in Khirbet Al-Meiteh in the Jordan valley say they have lived there for decades. Israel says they built structures there illegally without permits.

The Israeli military said soldiers were enforcing a court order against illegal building in the area, but it is looking into the incident. It said forces used non-lethal

riot dispersal means when the Palestinian protesters assaulted the forces with rocks. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Paul Hirschson said a formal complaint might be filed with the French over the diplomat's involvement. "If she did participate then a formal complaint will be filed because that is not the way diplomats behave," he said.

The French embassy declined comment, and

Castaing could not immediately be reached for comment.

Rights groups say the shacks were dismantled earlier this week.

The U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator James Rawley issued a statement expressing "deep concern" over the incident and calling upon Israeli authorities to "live up to their obligations as occupying power to protect those communities under their responsibility." □

Officials:

US moves to withhold Egypt aid money

BRADLEY KLAPPER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration moved Friday to ensure it does not lose more than \$500 million in potential Egypt aid as it weighs suspending assistance after this summer's coup, U.S. officials and congressional aides said.

In a notification to Congress, the State Department outlined its intention to spend the money. But left unclear in the procedural step was how it would use the funds, with officials still mulling whether to punish Egypt's military by withholding economic and military assistance.

Under that approach, much of the cash would be used to compensate American companies for "wind up" costs to help them end assistance programs.

Halting aid to Egypt would be a dramatic shift for an administration that has declined to label the ouster of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi on July 3 a coup and argued it was in U.S. national security interests to keep American support flowing. It would also likely have profound implications following decades of close U.S.-Egyptian ties that have served as a bulwark of security and stability in the Middle East.

President Barack Obama's top national security aides have recommended suspending much of the money, U.S. officials have said. That would include all foreign military funding except money that supports security in the increasingly volatile Sinai Peninsula and along Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip.

The recommendation has been with Obama since late August, but officials said Friday they do not expect him to make a decision while Syria's crisis over chemical weapons use is commanding so much time and energy. □

Sudan leader set to address the UN despite indictments

PETER SPIELMANN

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — If he shows up as scheduled, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir will set an uncomfortable precedent when he speaks before the U.N. General Assembly.



In this file photo, Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir, in full military dress, gets out of his vehicle as he visits the military hospital, in Khartoum, Sudan. Sudan is calling on the United States to issue its president a visa as soon as possible to attend the U.N. General Assembly.

(AP Photo/Abd Raouf)

He would be the first head of state to address the annual U.N. gathering of world leaders while facing international war crimes and genocide charges.

Al-Bashir is facing two International Criminal Court indictments for crimes linked to the conflict in the western Darfur region of Sudan, where an estimated 300,000 people have died since 2003. He has applied for a U.S. visa to come to the U.N. General Assembly, and is scheduled to speak next Thursday afternoon.

The U.S. government has made it clear it does not want al-Bashir to show up in New York.

"Such a trip would be deplorable, cynical and hugely inappropriate," said Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

But under a U.S. treaty with the United Nations dating to 1947, Washington is obligated to issue the visa as the world body's host country. The United States has never banned a visiting head of state who wants to speak to the United Nations.

State Department deputy

spokeswoman Marie Harf sidestepped a question about whether al-Bashir could be arrested if he comes to the U.S.

"There are a variety of considerations in play with respect to President Bashir's visa request, including the outstanding warrant for his arrest," Harf said Friday. "But we're not going to sort through these considerations publicly. We're going to continue to do so privately and deliberately." Sudan's Foreign Ministry has said the United States is "not qualified ... to offer sermons and advice" on international law and human rights and called on Washington to swiftly grant al-Bashir's visa.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon joined the United States in reiterating that al-Bashir is wanted for genocide and war crimes and should cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

Elise Keppler, a Sudan expert with Human Rights Watch, said Friday al-Bashir would be met in New York with angry protests from demonstrators, and could be putting himself in legal jeopardy.

"The key here is that this is an unprecedented situation," she said. "There hasn't been clear legal ruling on this set of circumstances."

The United States has declined to sign onto the Rome Statute treaty establishing the International Criminal Court, fearing that U.S. citizens — particularly members of the military involved in global conflicts — could be indicted by other countries for war crimes.

But "other commitments that the U.S. has signed for justice for these kinds of crimes are important," Keppler said.

"You also have the Genocide Convention that talks about the need to punish those who commit genocide," she said. The United States has ratified that treaty, with the restriction that it will not allow the trial of U.S. citizens for genocide without its consent. □

House Passes Spending Bill, Obama Rebukes

Continued from Front

Even as the House muscled through its spending bill, House Republican leaders met behind closed doors with their rank and file on Friday to lay out the next step in the budget battle: a bill that would raise the government's statutory borrowing limit, delay implementation of the health care law for a year, and push a grab-bag of Republican initiatives like binding instructions to overhaul the tax code and mandatory construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

All of the measures tied to the debt-ceiling increase have passed the Republican-controlled House before, only to be ignored by the Senate.

said after the vote. "We've said from the beginning that this law will harm our economy, and we're seeing our economy turn from a full-time job economy to a part-time job economy. That's why we are doing our job, and now it is up to Senate Democrats to show some responsibility and follow the House's lead."

But the gambit also sets Congress down a path with no definitive end, with stakes that rise by the day. Absent a deal between the House, Senate and White House, much of the government would shut down Oct. 1.

And by mid-October, the federal government would face its first debt default, an outcome that would roil the international economy and deal a blow to a do-

automatic, across-the-board spending cuts that took effect in March. It also would block spending on the health care law, just days before the uninsured begin signing up to purchase private health care coverage through insurance marketplaces known as exchanges.

Just one Republican crossed party lines to vote against the bill, Rep. Scott Rigell of Virginia, who represents a very military-dependent district and wants to end the sequestration spending cuts.

The only Democrats to vote in favor were Reps. Jim Matheson of Utah and Mike McIntyre of North Carolina.

Obama has already issued a threat to veto the bill, but it will never reach his desk.



House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) speaks during a news conference with House Republicans following their vote on a stopgap spending bill, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Sept. 20, 2013. In a 230-to-189 vote Friday, Republicans passed the stopgap bill that would strip all funding for President Barack Obama's health care law, setting up another bitter fiscal showdown.

(Gabriella Demczuk/The New York Times)

The two bills - to finance the government through Dec. 15 and raise the debt ceiling - were intended to unite House Republicans and placate an emboldened right wing of the party.

"The House has been fighting to stop Obamacare since 2009, and we have said over and over again, this law is going to increase the costs for the working middle class families of this country and we're now seeing it," Rep. Eric Cantor, R-Va., the majority leader,

mestic economy just getting to its feet.

"We are legislators. We have come here to do a job for the American people," pleaded Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., the House minority leader.

"What is brought to the floor today is without a doubt a measure designed to shut down the government. It could have no other intent."

The House bill would keep the government operating at the current funding level, which reflects the

Even Senate Republican supporters say they cannot push it through the Democratic-controlled Senate. Instead, the Senate is likely to strip the health care provision from the bill next week and send it back to the House.

Senior Republicans say Boehner will likely choose the latter course, possibly attaching a provision to delay tax penalties on uninsured Americans who decline to purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. □

13 wounded as gunmen open fire in Chicago park

TIMOTHY WILLIAMS

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Thirteen people, including a 3-year-old boy, were hit by bullets Thursday night

Chicago's South Side, the police said.

There were no fatalities, but the child was shot in the head, and he and two

any arrests in the shooting. The shooting is the latest outburst of violence in the city, which had more than 500 homicides in 2012 -

people.

The vast majority of the violence has occurred in poorer neighborhoods on the city's South and West Sides. Thursday's shooting again vaulted the issue to the center of the city's continuing conversation about the causes of gun violence and potential solutions for the problem.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel canceled events on the East Coast on Friday and was flying home because of the shooting, his aides said. Among the events called off were a scheduled appearance at a rally on behalf of Cory Booker, the Democratic U.S. Senate candidate in New Jersey, and meetings in Washington, D.C., with the secretaries of the departments of Energy and Labor.

"The perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice and prosecuted to the full extent of the law," Emanuel said in a state-

ment. "I encourage everyone in the community to step forward with any information and everyone in Chicago to continue their individual efforts to build stronger communities where violence has no place."

The shooting occurred at about 10:15 p.m. Thursday, when at least two men fired at a group of people at a basketball game at Cornell Square Park in the Back of the Yards neighborhood, the police said, sending players and spectators scrambling for cover as dozens of bullets were fired at the court.

The victims ranged in age from 3 to 41, according to the Fire Department. Two of the wounded were teenagers.

Family members identified the wounded young boy as Deonta Howard, whose uncle was shot and killed Sept. 2, according to The Chicago Tribune. □



Chicago Police detectives investigate the scene early Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, where a number of people, including a 3-year-old child, were shot Thursday night in a city park in Chicago. Thursday night's attack was the latest violence in a city that has struggled to stop such shootings by increasing police patrols.

(AP Photo/Paul Beatty)

as at least two gunmen opened fire on a group of people who had gathered at a basketball court on

other people were hospitalized in critical condition Friday, the authorities said. The police have not made

more than any other city in the nation, and about 80 more than New York, which has twice as many

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Employer says not told of alleged D.C. shooter's behavior



Military personnel and workers walk along the perimeter of the Washington Navy Yard Friday, Sept. 20, 2013. The Washington Navy Yard reopened for normal operations on Thursday with returning employees saying they still felt unsettled about the shooting there earlier this week in which a gunman killed 12 people.

Travis Andersen
GLOBE STAFF

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Authorities did not alert the defense contractor that employed Aaron Alexis about his bizarre behavior at a Newport, R.I., hotel about a month before his rampage in Washington on Monday that killed 12 people, a company spokesman said Wednesday.

The spokesman for The Experts, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based information technology company that does work for the military, said neither Newport police nor naval authorities notified them of Alexis's odd behavior, which occurred on the morning of Aug. 7 at a Marriott hotel. According to a Newport police report, Alexis, 34, told officers that he believed three people were talking to him through walls at the Marriott and previously at a hotel at Naval Station Newport and at a Residence Inn in Middletown, R.I.

He also told police that the trio was using a machine to send vibrations through the ceiling in his room at the Marriott and into his body,

the report said. Newport Police Sergeant Frank C. Rosa Jr. wrote in the report that he informed a police official at the Newport base of the episode, since Alexis identified himself as a naval contractor. Rosa wrote that the official told him the base would follow up on Alexis to determine if he was, in fact, a naval contractor.

On Wednesday, the base referred questions to the FBI, and an FBI spokeswoman in Washington declined to comment on the statement from The Experts that the company had not been notified of the hotel behavior.

The Experts has said publicly that Alexis worked for them for about six months in the last year, and that two background checks were performed and the US Defense Department twice confirmed the ex-naval reservist's government security clearance. Alexis worked as desktop support technician.

"The latest background check and security clearance confirmation were in late June of 2013 and revealed no issues other

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

than one minor traffic violation," the company said in a statement issued Tuesday.

Alexis had run-ins with civilian police, including being investigated twice for weapons violations in 2004 and 2010, though the inquiries did not result in criminal convictions, according to news reports. Also Wednesday, the US Department of Veterans Affairs confirmed that Alexis went to VA hospitals in Providence and Washington, D.C., last month for insomnia-related issues, weeks after the episode at the Marriott.

In a statement, the department said Alexis visited the VA Medical Center in Providence on Aug. 23 and complained of insomnia. He was given a "small amount" of medication to help him sleep and told to follow up with a primary care doctor, the statement

said.

Five days later, Alexis went to the VA Medical Center in Washington and asked for a refill of the medication, attributing his sleeping difficulties to his work schedule, the VA said.

"On both occasions, Mr. Alexis was alert and oriented, and was asked by VA doctors if he was struggling with anxiety or depression, or had thoughts about harming himself or others, all of which he denied," the statement said, adding that Alexis was given a "small refill" and again told to follow up with a doctor. The VA did not identify the medication he received, though the New York Times has reported that it was Traxodone, which is commonly used to treat insomnia. □

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Unemployment rates rise in a third of US states

C S. RUGABER
 AP Economics Writer
 WASHINGTON (AP) — Employers cut jobs in 20 states last month, suggesting modest improvement in the job market this year is not enough to benefit all areas of the United States. The Labor Department said Friday that 29 states added jobs in August. Unemployment rates rose in 18 states, fell in 17 and were unchanged in 15.

"The picture is decidedly mixed," said Jim Diffley, chief US regional economist at IHS Global Insight. "We're still optimistic about the improvement (in hiring), but it's been slow."

Nationally, the economy added 169,000 jobs in August, a modest gain but hardly enough to suggest a robust job market. The U.S. unemployment rate was 7.3 percent.

The tepid hiring gains mean that most states still have fewer jobs than they did when the recession began in December 2007. IHS Global Insight forecasts that only 18 states will have returned to their pre-reces-



Job seekers fill out applications at a job fair in Miami Lakes, Fla. Employers cut jobs in 20 states last month, suggesting modest improvement in the job market this year is not enough to benefit all areas of the United States.

(AP Photo/Alan Diaz)

sion job levels by the end of this year. Overall, the United States still has 1.9 million fewer jobs than before the recession. Hiring has averaged just 155,000 a month since April. That's down from an

average of 205,000 in the first four months. Nevada's payrolls rose 11,200. Still, its unemployment rate remained 9.5 percent, the highest in the nation. Louisiana added 14,000

jobs. Its unemployment rate was also unchanged, at 7 percent. Illinois had the second-highest unemployment rate at 9.2 percent. North Dakota reported the lowest rate, at 3 percent. □

US college student helps pay tuition by eating

MADISON, Wisconsin (AP) — A U.S. university student is eating his way through school — competitively. Computer engineering student Eric Dahl now ranks third in the world of competitive eating as determined by All Pro Eating rankings. Dahl has earned more than \$18,000 in prize money or merchandise to help pay for his education. "I'm eating for my educa-

tion," he said. "It helps me get through." Dahl was drawn to competitive eating in 2011, at a steakhouse in Wisconsin. Dahl didn't want to pay for his meal so he signed up for a challenge: eat a 3-pound (1.3-kilogram) cheesesteak sandwich in less than 10 minutes and skip the bill. He finished in 5 minutes, 50 seconds. "It just started rolling from

there," he said. The former athlete finds the competition and its over-the-top atmosphere reminiscent of professional wrestling. "I really get pumped when the crowd starts cheering," he said. "I'm friends with other competitive eaters, but once I'm on stage I don't have any friends." Dahl said he walks a few miles a day, lifts weights

twice a week and plays soccer and hockey to maintain his 220-pound (99-kilogram) weight. The State Journal reports that he eats no more than 3,100 calories a day, mostly vegetables to avoid increasing his waistline, and stretches his stomach by eating 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) of cabbage or broccoli in a single sitting followed by a lot of water. □

Brain-eating amoeba rattles bayou nerves

JANET McCONNAUGHEY
 Associated Press
 NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A deadly, brain-eating amoeba has been found in the water supply of a Louisiana community near New Orleans, scaring residents and sending officials on the hunt for its source. Experts say the only danger is to people who manage to get the microscopic organism way up their noses. Its only entry to the brain is through tiny openings in a bone about level with the top of the eyeball, said Dr. Raoult Ratard, Louisiana's state epidemiologist. The state Department of Health and Hospitals on Thursday tried to dispel common "myths and rumors" about the amoeba Naegleria fowleri — starting with the notion that the St. Bernard Parish water isn't safe to drink. The worries began Sept. 12, when the state health department reported that water in the Violet and Arabi communities outside New Orleans tested positive for the amoeba that killed a 4-year-old Mississippi boy in August after he visited St. Bernard Parish.

Jonathan Yoder, an epidemiologist in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's waterborne disease prevention branch, said Naegleria has never before been found in water treated by a U.S. water system. There have been 132 documented infections from the amoeba since 1962, almost all of them fatal, health officials say. □

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US Financial Front:

Home Depot dropping part-timers' health benefits

David Markiewicz

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ATLANTA -- Home Depot is eliminating the limited medical insurance it offers its many part-time employees, forcing those workers to seek coverage from new public insurance marketplaces that open Oct. 1 or face a penalty.

The Atlanta-based retailing giant said its move is in reaction to the new law on health care coverage, the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

Home Depot joins a growing list of corporations that have sliced or shifted their employee health insurance offerings, some citing potential savings and others pointing to better employee benefits.

The change affects about 20,000 part-time Home Depot workers nationwide who take the insurance coverage. Some part-time workers do not take the coverage. The company has about 340,000 employees, but the retailer would not say how many are part-time.

The company would not disclose how much it will save by dropping the insurance. Spokesman Stephen Holmes said, "We do not believe the impact of ACA will be material to the company's financials."

Some experts say the move to send workers to

health care exchanges could improve the coverage options available to them.

"What they are doing makes a lot of sense for their part-time employees," said David Bottoms, senior vice president at the Bottoms Group, an Atlanta employee benefits consultant. "While I am not privy to the benefit details on their particular limited benefit plan, this move will enable their part-time employees to secure richer coverage than that being provided on the limited-benefit plan while also benefiting from government premium subsidies." Individuals can qualify for subsidies toward the cost of their insurance if their household income is low enough.

In a letter to its employees, the company wrote: "As part of the new health care law, limited medical plans are no longer allowable in 2014. Our current part-time ... plans are impacted by this."

The letter continues, "In place of that, the law does provide for a new public Marketplace (or 'exchange') that will offer you more options. Beginning in October, you can shop in the Marketplace for comprehensive medical coverage that meets your needs." □



Shoppers and sales representatives walk through the aisles at the Home Depot store in Williston, Vt. Home Depot is eliminating the limited medical insurance it offers its many part-time employees, forcing those workers to seek coverage from new public insurance marketplaces that open Oct. 1 or face a penalty.

(AP Photo/Toby Talbot)

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Syria sends watchdog chemical weapons inventory

MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Syria has sent the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons an "initial declaration" outlining its weapons program, the organization said Friday, in keeping with the

agreement Russia and the U.S. brokered to have Syria give up its chemical weapons arsenal.

Michael Luhan, the organization's spokesman, told The Associated Press the declaration is "being reviewed by our verification division," but details of it will

not be released.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said the United States and other nations that have joined the chemical weapons organization "will be making a careful and thorough review of the initial document."

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, based in The Hague, polices a global treaty known as the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, which bars the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical arms.

The organization relies on a global network of more than a dozen top laboratories to analyze field samples.

U.S. officials said last week that the United States and Russia agreed that Syria had roughly 1,000 metric tons of chemical weapons agents and precursors, including blister agents, such as sulfur and mustard gas and nerve agents like sarin. In the aftermath of the U.N. report that concluded sarin had been used in an attack in Damascus last month, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is looking at ways to fast-track moves to secure and destroy Syria's arsenal of poison gas and nerve agents as well as its production facilities.

However, diplomatic efforts to speed up the process are moving slowly. A meeting initially scheduled for Sunday at which the organization's 41-nation executive council was to have discussed a U.S.-Russian plan to swiftly rid Syria of chemical weapons was postponed Friday, and no new date was immediately set. No reason was given for the postponement. Harf said she did not know why the meeting was postponed, but said Syria's initial declaration was a step Washington was seeking "and we'll go from there." Under a U.S.-Russia agreement brokered last weekend in Geneva, inspectors are to be on the ground in Syria by November. □

'Jihad' family convicted in French court

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A French appeals court convicted a woman and her brother on Friday for "justifying a crime" after her toddler son, named Jihad, went to preschool in a T-shirt bearing the words "I am a bomb" and "Jihad: Born on Sept. 11," a defense lawyer said.

Bouchra Bagour was given a 2,000-euro fine and a one-month suspended prison sentence and her brother, Zayed, received a 4,000-euro fine and two-month suspended sentence in the court in south-eastern Nimes, her lawyer, Gaelle Guenoun, said by phone.

The ruling, which strikes at the intersection of free speech and France's laws barring hate speech and denial of crimes like genocide, comes months after a lower court in nearby Avignon acquitted the defendants. In France, prosecutors can appeal such rulings — and they did in this case, to the Nimes appeals court.

Under French law, justifying a crime in public is punishable by up to five years in prison and a 45,000-euro fine.

Guenoun called the decision "severe" and said she was astonished the lower court's verdict was overruled, arguing that it had weighed the case thoroughly.

The ruling centered on a teacher's complaint after the boy, whose birthday is Sept. 11, wore the shirt to preschool in the Provence town of Sorgues last year. The brother had the shirt made, according to the lawyer. □



Opposition fighters react, on return from the battlefield in the neighboring village of Kafr Nabuda, in the Idlib province countryside, Syria.

(AP Photo)



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Pope blasts abortion after decrying focus on rules

NICOLE WINFIELD

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis offered an olive branch of sorts to the doctrine-minded, conservative wing of the Catholic Church on Friday as he denounced abortions as a symptom of today's "throw-away culture" and encouraged Catholic doctors to refuse to perform them.

Francis issued a strong anti-abortion message and cited Vatican teaching on the need to defend the unborn during an audience with Catholic gynecologists.

It came a day after he was quoted as blasting the church's obsession with "small-minded rules" that are driving the faithful away. In an interview that has sent shockwaves through the church, Francis urged its pastors to focus on being merciful and wel-

coming rather than insisting only on such divisive, hot-button issues as abortion, gay marriage and contraception.

Even before the interview was published, some conservatives had voiced disappointment that Francis had shied away from restating such church rules. Francis explained his reason for doing so in the interview with the Jesuit journal La Civiltà Cattolica, saying church teaching on such issues is well-known, he supports it, but that he doesn't feel it necessary to repeat it constantly.

He did repeat it on Friday, however. In his comments, Francis denounced today's "throw-away culture" that justifies disposing of lives, and said doctors in particular had been forced into situations where they are called to "not respect life." "Every child that isn't born,

but is unjustly condemned to be aborted, has the face of Jesus Christ, has the face of the Lord," he said. He urged the gynecologists to abide by their consciences and help bring

lives into the world. "Things have a price and can be for sale, but people have a dignity that is priceless and worth far more than things," he said.

Francis' comments to Civiltà

Cattolica contained no change in church teaching, but they represented a radical shift in tone and stood in stark contrast to the priorities of his two immediate predecessors. □



Pope Francis meets Hungary's President Janos Ader, during a private audience at the Vatican, Friday, Sept. 20, 2013.

(AP Photo/Claudio Peri, Pool)




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Coordinated attack points to al-Qaida surge in Yemen

AHMED AL-HAJ
Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Under a heavy fog, al-Qaida militants disguised in military uniforms launched car bomb attacks on three different security and military posts in southern Yemen on Friday, killing 38 soldiers in the group's biggest attack in the country since last year.

The coordinated attacks point to how al-Qaida is exploiting the continued weakness of Yemen's military to rally back here at a time when the group's branches across the region grow more assertive. More than two years after U.S. raid that killed Osama bin Laden, factions of the group he led are taking advantage of turmoil in multiple Arab nations to expand their presence and influence.

In Syria, foreign jihadists linked to or inspired by al-Qaida have become such a powerful force in the rebellion that the Syrian opposition on Friday accused them of being opportunists hijacking the uprising

against President Bashar Assad. After the coup in Egypt toppled the Islamist president, al-Qaida leaders have called on sympa-

matic missions across the Middle East and North Africa after intelligence agencies intercepted a message between al-Qaida

ter for Security Studies at Georgetown University. Experts in extremist networks see no clear evidence of coordination

haps the most powerful of the terror group's branches in the region. It carried out a series of attempted attacks on U.S. soil — and Washington branded it one of the world's most dangerous terror groups. In 2011, with Yemen in political turmoil amid the uprising that eventually led to the removal of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, al-Qaida fighters seized control of a string of cities and towns in the south.

It was beaten back in 2012 by a Yemeni military offensive supported by a heavy campaign of U.S. drone strikes. The assaults drove its fighters out of the southern strongholds and into hiding in mountainous regions, from which they harried the Yemeni military with attacks and assassinations. Near-daily U.S. drone attacks in the first week of August killed 34 suspected al-Qaida militants.

Friday's attacks in the southern province of Shabwa, a one-time al-Qaida stronghold, showed the group's continued capabilities.

Militants struck three security and military posts nearly simultaneously at 6 a.m. in an area near the Balhaf liquefied gas export terminal on the Arabian Sea coast. □



Yemeni soldiers man a checkpoint on a street leading to the U.S. and British embassies in Sanaa, Yemen. A Yemeni military official said Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, that coordinated attacks by al-Qaida militants in Maysaa and Kamp areas in Shabwa province killed scores of soldiers and wounded dozens.

(AP Photo/Hani Mohammed)

thizers to join militants' fight there against the military. Iraq's al-Qaida branch has stepped up attacks in that country and extended operations into neighboring Syria.

Last month, the U.S. temporarily closed 19 diplo-

leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and Nasser al-Wahishi, also a one-time confidant of bin Laden who leads the Yemen branch, known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. "I think there's been a promiscuous rush to write al-Qaida's obituary, and it's always been presumptuous. It's certainly had setbacks ... but its resilience has always been more formidable than we imagine," said Bruce Hoffman, director of the Cen-

between groups under the al-Qaida banner. But gains by one serve as powerful encouragement and recruiting tools for others.

"What matters perhaps more is how they may draw inspiration from each other," said Theodore Karasik, a security and political affairs analyst at the Dubai-based Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis.

For a time, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula was per-

Iraq:

Leader denies holding 7 Iranian dissidents

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq denied Friday that it is holding seven missing members of an Iranian dissident group following a deadly attack on its compound north of Baghdad earlier this month. The group accuses Iraq of detaining the Camp Ashraf residents and of planning to transfer them to Iran against their will.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki denied holding the seven on his official website. His statement also reiterated officials' claims that Iraqi forces were not behind the Sept. 1 shooting at the camp that killed 52 Mujahedeen-e-Khalq members.

Iraq has pledged to inves-

tigate the killings. It is impatient with efforts to resettle more than 2,800 former camp residents abroad.

Group spokesman Shahriar Kia blasted al-Maliki's statement as a "ridiculous claim" and charged that the government is blocking an investigation into the killings. Meanwhile, 34 members of Congress urged U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to cut American assistance to Iraq if the government fails to facilitate the release of the seven individuals being held and improve security at Camp Liberty, where the rest of the group are living while they await resettlement overseas.

"The message does

not seem to be getting through," the lawmakers said in a letter Friday. "We must do a better job at holding the government of Iraq accountable."

Members of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, which is strongly opposed to Iran's clerical regime, were welcomed into Iraq by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s during the brutal war with neighboring Iran.

Their fortunes turned sharply with the Iraqi dictator's toppling in the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. Iraq's current Shiite-led Iraqi government, which has strengthened ties with Tehran, considers their presence in the country illegal. □



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In this Feb. 12, 2004 file photo, U.S. nun Dorothy Stang, of Dayton, Ohio, prepares to enter Para's legislature in Belem, Brazil. A Brazilian rancher charged with ordering the 2005 slaying of Stang has been sentenced to 30 years in prison for homicide.
(AP Photo/Carlos Silva)

Rancher sentenced in case of murdered US nun

STAN LEHMAN

Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — A Brazilian rancher charged with ordering the 2005 slaying of American nun and Amazon defender Dorothy Stang has been sentenced to 30 years in prison for homicide.

Vitalmiro Bastos de Moura had been tried three times before and sentenced to up to 30 years in prison, but his lawyers appealed and the Supreme Court annulled Moura's latest conviction. The high court said he wasn't given enough time to prepare his defense during the 2010 trial.

The state prosecutor's of-

fice said the 43-year-old Moura is in the same prison he's been held in since 2010.

Local media quoted Stang's brother David, who was present at the trial, as saying: "Justice has been made. I am very happy."

Phone calls and an emailed request for comment from David Stang went unanswered Friday.

Prosecutors contend that Moura and another rancher hired gunmen to kill Stang. The defense said there wasn't enough evidence linking Moura to the crime and planned to appeal.

After beginning Thursday

morning, the lightning-quick trial ended late that night in a state court in Belem, the capital of the violence-wracked Amazonian state of Para. State prosecutors said the trial moved quickly because it was Moura's fourth and most of the legal processes had been taken care of in previous trials.

Regivaldo Galvao, another rancher also charged with planning Stang's murder, was sentenced to a 30-year jail term in 2010. Last year, the Supreme Court ordered his release, saying he had the right to remain free pending the outcome of his appeal process. □

Peru:

Campaign to halt cat-eating festival

Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — A Peruvian congressman has joined animal rights activists to try and halt the consumption of barbecued cat at an annual religious festival. The activists say at least 100 cats will be eaten at this weekend's festival of Santa Efigenia in La Quebrada, a town south of Lima.

Congressman Juan Urquiza joined activists this year to write the district mayor and Peru's health minister and

demand a ban on cat-eating under a domestic animal protection law. Activists also claim that dining on felines is a public health danger.

Health Minister Midori de Habich says the practice should be halted. But she has taken no action.

La Quebrada residents defend their tradition and say the cats sacrificed are specially bred with only a handful killed and eaten. □



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United States, Venezuela in overflight spat

FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— U.S. officials said Friday that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was granted permission to fly over U.S. airspace after an apparent initial denial over his government's having requested it on short notice.

The officials issued the explanation after Maduro and his foreign ministry complained vociferously Thursday evening.

Maduro tweeted late Thursday that he had departed for China but did not say whether the commercial Cuban plane in which he was traveling had altered its route.

The U.S. Embassy in Caracas said Friday in a statement that Venezuela had requested diplomatic clearance to fly over Puerto Rico with one day's notice. Such clearances usually require three days' notice, it said.

There was also confusion because the aircraft did not actually require diplomatic clearance because it was a commercial Cuban de Aviacion jet on loan, said the embassy's acting chief of mission, Gregory M. Adams.

He said that while he didn't have the details, his impression was that U.S. of-

ficials were "caught short" and initially denied overflight permission.

Venezuela's top diplomat in Washington, Calixto Ortega, said the U.S. had reversed itself following "intense conversations."

He told state TV that the U.S. government had approved a similar overflight

submitted, US authorities worked with Venezuelan officials at the Venezuelan embassy to resolve the issue. US authorities made an extraordinary effort to work with relevant authorities to grant overflight approval in a matter of hours."

"We advised Venezuela on

Maduro later complained about the airspace issue and said the United States had refused to grant a visa to retired Gen. Wilmer Barrientos, his chief of staff. The U.S. Embassy had no immediate comment on Maduro's allegation of the visa denial. A spokeswoman said the State Department typically does not comment on visa matters. Venezuela has had strained relations with the U.S. in recent years and the two countries have been without ambassadors since 2010.

Both countries appeared to be on a fast track to normalize relations after Java and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met in early June.

But Maduro announced the following month that he was freezing the effort after the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, said at her Senate confirmation hearing that Venezuela was guilty of "a crackdown on civil society."

Maduro, the hand-picked successor of the late Hugo Chavez, has repeatedly accused Washington of conspiring to overthrow his government and expelled two U.S. military attaches on March 5, just hours before announcing Chavez's death from cancer. □



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, right, and Foreign Minister Elias Java, stand on the balcony of the Foreign Ministry after meeting with South Africa's foreign minister, in Caracas, Venezuela.

(AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

route for the same plane a few months ago without question and that Venezuela was concerned because Maduro planned to arrive in New York on the same plane on Sept. 24 or 25 for the U.N. General Assembly.

In its statement, the U.S. Embassy said: "Although the request was not properly

the correct way to get the clearance, and as a result we were able to notify the Venezuelan authorities last night that permission was granted."

On Thursday afternoon, Foreign Minister Elias Java aired the first complaint, saying that prohibiting the flight amounted to an "aggression."

Turks and Caicos lawyer charged in corruption case

DANICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A high-profile attorney who runs a law firm in the Turks and Caicos Islands with numerous international clients was arrested on corruption charges, officials said Friday.

Norman Saunders Jr. was charged as part of an ongoing investigation that has seen the British territory seize money and property that officials say were improperly obtained by corrupt politicians.

Saunders faces three charges such as acquiring criminal property in a case linked to a former government minister whose trial is scheduled to start next year.

Saunders appeared in court Friday but did not enter a plea. He is out on bail and is scheduled to appear in court on Nov. 8, governor's office spokesman Neil Smith said in a phone interview.

A woman who answered the phone at Saunders' law firm, Saunders & Co., said he wasn't there and said she didn't know if he had an attorney. Saunders did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

It is the second time he's been charged, and he previously has denied the allegations.

Saunders is the son of Norman B. Saunders, a former territory chief minister who was indicted in March 1985 in Miami on charges of conspiring to smuggle drugs into the U.S. He was sentenced to eight years in prison. After his release, he was re-elected to the local House of Assembly and still serves as a legislator. □

UK regulator probing alleged bra price-fixing

LONDON (AP) — It turns out athletically inclined British women may be paying too much for their underwear.

Britain's retail regulator said Friday it has evidence that an underwear maker and three department stores colluded to inflate the price of a popular sports bra.

The Office of Fair Trading said it is investigating whether DB Apparel U.K. entered into anti-competitive agreements with retailers John Lewis, Debenhams and House of Fraser between 2008 and 2011 over the Shock Absorber bra.

The investigation involves

three of Britain's most-established retailers.

The regulator said its provisional view was that the manufacturer and the stores agreed on retail prices, in a "serious infringement of competition law." The office's senior director of services, Ann Pope, said the agency would hear

from the companies before making a final ruling.

The companies dispute the claims and say they are cooperating with investigators.

The Shock Absorber was once advertised by tennis player Anna Kournikova under the slogan: "Only the balls should bounce." □



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tumes and music came
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tors had to say about her
experience last night: "I
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hundred others including



locals and tourists. We fol-
lowed a parade of cos-
tumed dancers, trumpet
players, and drummers.
I love any opportunity to
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others who feel the same.

People wait a whole year
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Gras but this happens ev-
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try that celebrates every
Thursday? Imagine what
it would be like if it hap-
pened everywhere?" □

Announcing a multi-million-dollar investment: Aruba will have the largest Diamonds International worldwide!



ORANJESTAD - According to plans currently on the table, construction will begin in the coming months, this after Diamonds International purchased the entire building which is currently Port of Call. After making a multi-million-dollar investment, the company will convert the entire mall into one jewelry store, the largest in the world for the Diamonds International firm. All of this at the entrance

of the port, to welcome tourists visiting the island by cruise ship. In addition to making a contribution to the beautification of the Oranjestad city center, the investment will also contribute to the island's economy. The renovations and construction work will undoubtedly provide more jobs in that sector, while the jewelry store will also need to employ more people once it has been expand-



co; Grand Cayman; Alaska, U.S.A.; Jamaica and Roatan, Honduras. Diamonds International Aruba will expand from the 500 square meters which the company currently has available to approximately 1,800 square meters. The entire Port of Call building will be converted into one large jewelry store, which includes special sections for renowned brands, as well as a VIP Area. The design is fresh and modern, to comply with the highest of Diamonds International standards. On the outside of the building, a landscaping design has been added that provides a harmonious whole with the part of the new tram project that passes in front of the building. In her speech, Keisha Williams, general manager Diamonds International Aruba, highlighted that the company sees a limitless potential in Aruba, an island with the highest operational levels of the entire Caribbean.

Continued on Page 15

Beauty On The Beach

Megan Janer

She is from Michigan. Her first time in Aruba, she is on her honeymoon, staying at Marriott Ocean Club. She loves the Aruban Beach and local food.

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ed. Once completed, Diamonds International will without doubt become a landmark in the efforts of the upgrading process ongoing in Oranjestad.

With the vision of growth in mind, Diamonds International presented a new management team, which will take the jewelry store to the next level. Daily management is currently in the hands of Keisha Williams and William Daly, who have at the least six years of experience within the company. They have both booked great successes in other markets, including Cozumel, Mexi-



The Caribbean's largest jewelry store



building tourists will have a special view of our young artists' creativity from their cruise ship as it sails into the port. Diamonds International is a private company, a family business managed by two brothers and their sister, Albert, Morris and Donna Gad. The jewelry business is advertised as the largest duty free jewelry firm in the world. Diamonds International headquar-

ters are in New York. The company was founded in 1986 with an investment of merely US\$ 10,000 on the island of St. Thomas and currently operates more than 130 stores in Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cabo San Lucas, Cancun, Costa Maya, Cozumel, Grand Cayman, Curaçao, Honduras, Juneau, Ketchikan, Key West, Mazatlan, Playa del Carmen, Puerto Vallarta, San



Jose del Cabo, Skagway, St. Kitts, St. Maarten, St. Thomas and Turks & Caicos.

The main objective of the company is to market principally to cruise passengers, by establishing its stores close to ports where there is heavy foot traffic. Diamonds International operates its stores under the names Diamonds International, Tanzanite International, DI Watch & Design, Watches International, Amsterdam Diamond Gallery, DI Collection and Tequileria International. □

Continued from Page 14

"There is no tourism economy better than Aruba's and we are very proud to be part of this destination's package," Keisha Williams expressed. "We have closely followed all the developments of the renovations in the Oranjestad city center and with much anticipation, like many other companies, we are very proud to do business in a country that invests so

much in protecting its past and builds for its future." During construction, Diamonds International will make all efforts to keep up the appearance of the building and cover its construction site. The company is developing a project together with schools, to recruit young artists in the coming weeks to help decorate the plywood that will be used to cover the construction site. Particularly at the back of the



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New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte pauses as he talks to reporters regarding his decision to retire at the end of the season, before the Yankees' baseball game against the San Francisco Giants on Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Associated Press

Yankees LHP Andy Pettitte to retire after season

MIKE FITZPATRICK

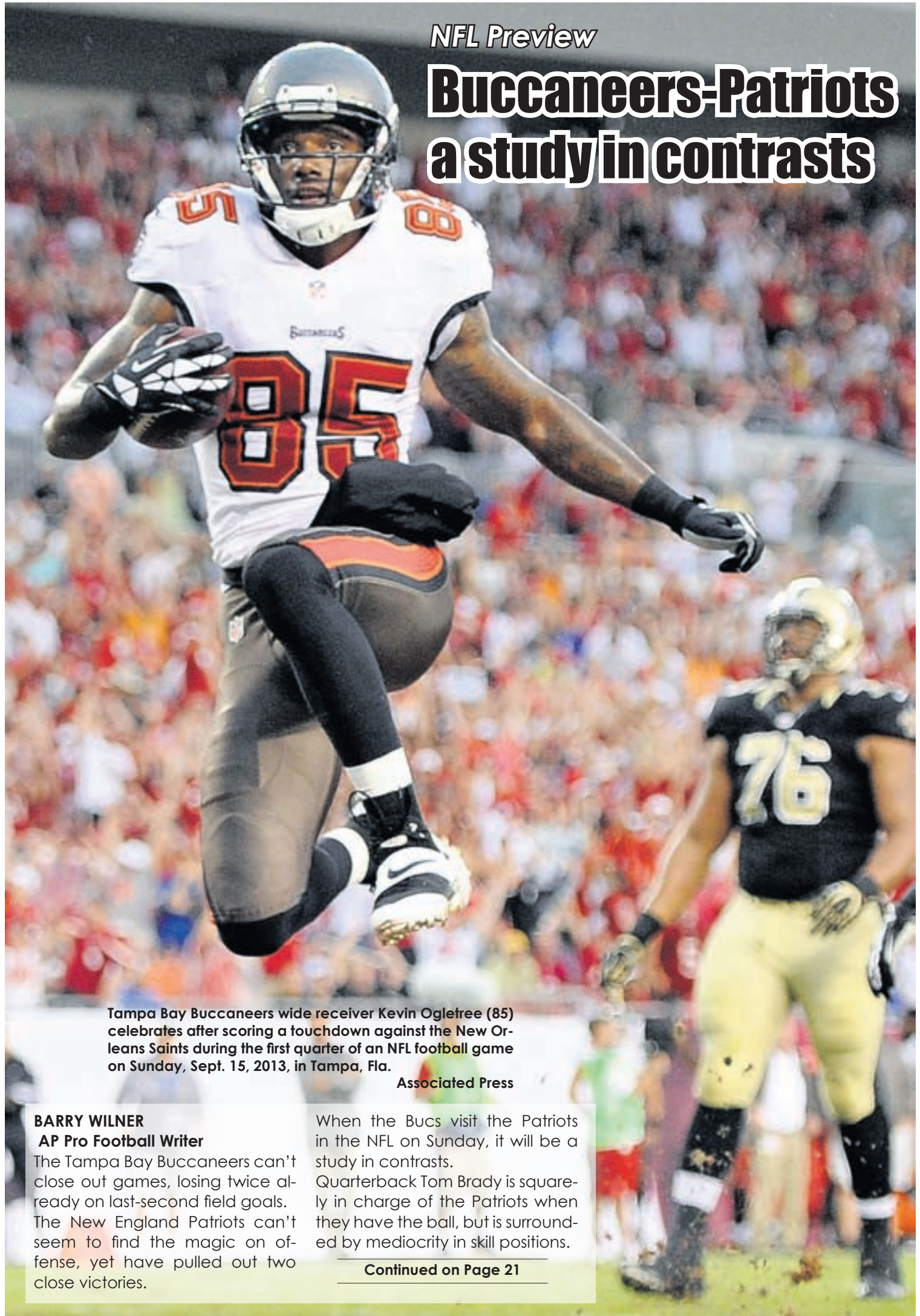
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) - Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte will retire after this season. The team announced Pettitte's decision in a news release Friday, hours before opening its final home stand. The 41-year-old left-hander initially retired after the 2010 season, but he sat out only one year before returning to the Yankees. "I've reached the point where I know that I've left everything I have out there on that field," Pettitte said in the statement. "The time is right. I've exhausted myself, mentally and physically, and that's exactly how I want to leave this game." In a nice bit of symmetry, Pettitte is scheduled to make two more starts this season - one at Yankee Stadium and the other in his hometown of Houston. Pettitte is set to pitch against the San Francisco Giants on Sunday, when the Yankees will honor longtime closer Mariano Rivera.

Continued on Page 22

NFL Preview

Buccaneers-Patriots a study in contrasts



Tampa Bay Buccaneers wide receiver Kevin Ogletree (85) celebrates after scoring a touchdown against the New Orleans Saints during the first quarter of an NFL football game on Sunday, Sept. 15, 2013, in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

BARRY WILNER

AP Pro Football Writer

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers can't close out games, losing twice already on last-second field goals. The New England Patriots can't seem to find the magic on offense, yet have pulled out two close victories.

When the Bucs visit the Patriots in the NFL on Sunday, it will be a study in contrasts.

Quarterback Tom Brady is squarely in charge of the Patriots when they have the ball, but is surrounded by mediocrity in skill positions.

Continued on Page 21



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Stenson builds 4-shot lead at Tour Championship

DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Henrik Stenson broke another club Friday — this time by accident.

And it didn't matter.

Playing with only 13 clubs in the bag after his 4-wood broke on the practice range, Stenson made three birdies on the opening four holes to shoot a 4-under 66 and build a four-shot lead over Adam Scott after the second round of the Tour Championship.

For all his birdies, the best move he made all week was deciding to put the 4-wood in his locker instead of carrying it with him.

Stenson heard a funny sound after hitting five shots on the range and realized the club's face had caved in. A television viewer who heard about the incident called the PGA Tour to see if the Swede had kept it in his bag, and officials checked with Stenson after his round.

If he had left it in the bag without using it, Stenson would have been assessed a four-shot penalty — the margin of his lead. If he had used the club, he would have been disqualified. Stenson was at 10-under 130 going into the third round and might be playing a course far less firm. The forecast is for rain most of day, and the starting times have been moved up to Saturday morning with hopes of getting the round in.

"It might seem like a large lead, but four shots during two rounds is not that much," he said. "So I'm pretty cool about that. I'm just going to go out and try to do the best I can for the next two days. And hope-

fully, that's good enough."

Tiger Woods is not in position to halt the hottest player in golf. Woods was headed toward the best round of the day, sitting at 5-under through 13 holes, when he made double bogey on the 14th, had a triple bogey on the 17th and wound up with a 71. He was 14 shots behind.

It was the first time since the 2011 PGA Championship that Woods began a tournament with back-to-back rounds over par.

"I put everything I had into that start and didn't have much at the end," Woods said.

Scott was one shot behind Stenson at the start of the round, but quickly fell five shots back with a couple of poor tee shots. The Australian played the last 14 holes without a bogey and wound up with a 69 that put him at 6-under 134.

The Masters champion chose to look at a different number — not four shots back, but only a guy ahead of him.

"Henrik is playing fantastic, so he's got this thing under control at the moment. But not for 36 holes," Scott said. "I think there's too many good players here. It's not just myself or someone at 5 under."

"If it is softer tomorrow because of rain, there could be a lot better scores because it's playing probably as tricky as it can at the moment."

Jordan Spieth, the 20-year-old rookie, had a 67 and was five shots behind. U.S. Open champion Justin Rose, Dustin Johnson and Billy Horschel were another shot back.

There's never a dull moment with Stenson, who

Henrik Stenson, of Sweden, hits from the second tee during the second round of play in the Tour Championship golf tournament at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta, Friday, Sept. 20, 2013.

Associated Press

only last week made news for all the wrong reasons when he smashed his driver on the final hole of the BMW Championship and tore up his locker at Conway Farms. □



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LA's Candace Parker wins WNBA MVP

BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles Sparks forward Candace Parker won the WNBA's Most Valuable Player award on Thursday, making her the fifth player in league history to receive the MVP twice.

Parker accepted the trophy from league president Laurel Richie before the Sparks took on the Phoenix Mercury in the opener of their Western Conference playoff series. She also earned \$15,000.

"I was shocked. I was so focused and into playoff mode," Parker said about learning the news in a phone call from Richie. "I'm really humbled and wasn't expecting this because of the great competition."

Parker edged out Minnesota's Maya Moore and Chicago's Elena Delle Donne in a tight ballot.

Parker finished with 234 points, Moore had 218 and Delle



WNBA President Laurel J. Richie, right, presents Los Angeles Sparks forward Candace Parker, left, with the WNBA MVP award during a media availability before the Sparks play the Phoenix Mercury in the opener of their WNBA basketball Western Conference semifinal series on Thursday, Sept. 19, 2013, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Donne 189. It's the closest the top two players have been in the voting since Sheryl Swoopes edged Lauren Jack-

son by two points in 2005.

Parker and Moore each received 10 first-place votes from the 39-member

national media panel.

"Candace is one of our most versatile players," Richie said. "She is a fierce, fierce competitor."

The 27-year-old forward averaged 17.9 points, 8.7 rebounds and 3.8 assists in helping the Sparks (24-10) finish second in the West.

It's the second MVP award for Parker, who won it her rookie year in 2008. Parker also won the All-Star game MVP this past July. She was runner-up to Tina Charles last season for the award.

"I feel like I have a lot more wrinkles and a lot more experience," Parker said.

Parker, who is still trying to win her first WNBA championship, joined Jackson, Swoopes, Lisa Leslie and Cynthia Cooper as players with multiple MVP awards.

"Individual awards can be disputed," Parker said. "You're not in elite company until you will your team to victory." □

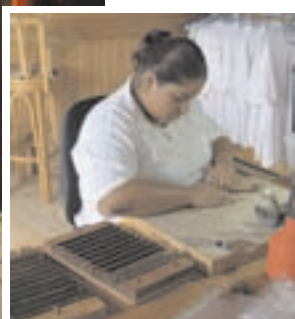
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Reid's return a success as Chiefs top Eagles 26-16

BARRY WILNER

AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Andy Reid's homecoming was a smashing success for the new Kansas City coach thanks to a dynamic defense that forced five turnovers and sacked a harried Michael Vick five times in the Chiefs' 26-16 victory Thursday night.

"Yeah, it was different," said Reid, who spent 14 years with the Eagles. "I was on the opposite side of the field than I normally am at. But I can't tell you that I was caught up in that part of it."

Vick even limped off with 1:07 to go after fumbling, but stayed around to hug Reid following the final play.

Kansas City, which has not had a giveaway in open-

ing 3-0, has won one more game already than it did in 2012 — when it earned the first overall draft pick, then hired Reid days after he was fired on the heels of Philly's 4-12 finish.

The usually stoic Reid showed some fire to match his bright red outfit late in the first half when he thought the Chiefs got a bad spot. He came out to the hash mark to yell at the officials, then walked off at halftime still gesturing his displeasure.

That was far more emotion than he displayed when he entered the stadium with the Chiefs just before kickoff. Although the Philly fans gave him a warm ovation, some standing in tribute to the man who won 140 games and six division titles for them, Reid walked brisk-



Kansas City Chiefs coach Andy Reid, left, and Dwayne Bowe celebrate in the final minutes of an NFL football game against the Philadelphia Eagles, Thursday, Sept. 19, 2013, in Philadelphia. Kansas City won 26-16.

Associated Press

ly along the sideline, never turning his gaze toward the stands.

But he later said he recog-

nized the tribute.

"I appreciate the fans and the support they gave me," he said. "That was kind of them." He certainly had to like much of what he saw on the field from his defense, particularly Houston. It was offensive master Reid's defense and special teams that set the tone and put his team ahead early, silencing the sea of green at the Linc. The Chiefs forced four first-half turnovers and Houston had three of their four sacks. He had another half-sack to start the second half, off a bad snap to Vick, and forced Vick to fumble with 1:34 remaining. Houston has 6 1/2 sacks in three games. Damaris Johnson's poor punt return gave Kansas City the ball at the Eagles 8, leading to Ryan Succop's 33-yard field goal for a quick 3-0 lead. Derrick Johnson then deflected Vick's ill-advised throw into the flat and Eric Berry picked it off, going 38 yards with the first interception of the year for the Philly quarterback.

There would be more mis-

takes as Philadelphia (1-2) lost its eighth straight home game. But first, after falling behind 10-0, Vick got the Eagles' no-huddle, fast-tempo offense going with the longest run of his 12-year career. He burst up the middle, shook off two attempted tackles and sped 61 yards. Two plays later, it was his arm doing the damage. Under a heavy rush, he stood in and led Jason Avant perfectly in the left corner of the end zone for a 22-yard score. That three-play, 87-yard spurt epitomized the fast-paced offense coach Chip Kelly brought from Oregon in replacing Reid. But Kelly got cute, going for a 2-point conversion on tight end Zach Ertz's run that failed. The takeaways kept the Chiefs in front. And after Avery turned a short pass into a 51-yard gain thanks to sloppy Eagles tackling, Succop made a 31-yard field goal. He kicked a 34-yarder moments later after another turnover, Sean Smith's interception, for a 16-6 halftime edge. □

NFL Preview

Continued from Page 18

Counterpart Josh Freeman has been the center of turmoil for the Bucs, struggling despite being surrounded by talent. New England has made key plays at key moments; the Bucs have not. "There's constant communication, so I think there's a lot of trust that's built up in the quarterback-receiver group," said Brady, who will be without injured receiver Danny Amendola but might get back tight end Rob Gronkowski. "I said after the game (against the Jets) the burden's on all of us. It's not the receiver position. It's the quarterback position most importantly. That's what I need to focus on. The better I am out there, the better we're going to be as an offense. So I've got to focus on doing my job as best I can."

The focus on Freeman has involved everything but

quarterbacking: Missed meetings, supposed trade requests, questions about his leadership, and speculation about a strained relationship with coach Greg Schiano, which both parties deny.

"Josh is going to be just fine," Schiano said of the fifth-year pro, who was 9 of 22 passing for 125 yards, one touchdown, an interception and a fumble against New Orleans last week. "We just need to keep practicing and get better, get in the groove. It will come." The Cincinnati Bengals and Green Bay Packers, set to meet on Sunday, are coming off strong performances after opening losses.

The Packers' offense has been in sync from the beginning, but their defense has been spotty and must contend with Cincinnati's versatile attack. Rookie Giovani Bernard has added flash to the running game, which already had

the power of BenJarvus Green-Ellis. Green Bay got a real boost from running back John Starks after first-round pick Eddie Lacy went out with a concussion against Washington. Starks, one of the heroes of the 2010 championship team, rushed for a career-best 132 yards last weekend, but the Bengals are stingy against the ground game. The team the Miami Dolphins host is not what the Atlanta Falcons hoped to field, with linebacker Sean Weatherspoon, defensive end Kroy Biermann and fullback Bradie Ewing on injured reserve, although Weatherspoon can return in Week 11. Running back Steven Jackson, Atlanta's key offseason acquisition, is out with a thigh injury.

Miami's best work has come in pressuring the quarterback, and without Jackson, how much of a threat is Atlanta's ground game to provide any balance? □

Red Sox clinch playoff berth, beat Orioles 3-1

BOSTON (AP) — BOSTON (AP) — Boston clinched its first postseason berth since 2009 with a 3-1 win over Baltimore on Thursday night. AL Capsules
Coming off a last-place finish and a 69-93 record — their most losses since 1965, the Red Sox have rebounded under first-year manager John Farrell and ensured at least a wild-card berth in the postseason. They lowered their magic number to two for clinching the AL East. Boston scored all its runs in the second on Stephen Drew's two-run homer and Dustin Pedroia's RBI single. John Lackey (10-12) held the Orioles hitless until Adam Jones homered with one out in the seventh, his 32nd this season. The right-hander allowed a one-out single to J.J. Hardy in the eighth, striking out eight and walked two in his 16th career complete game. Chris Tillman (16-7) gave up three runs and seven hits in seven innings with eight strikeouts and two walks.
RANGERS 8, RAYS 2
ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP) — Elvis Andrus drove in three runs as Texas beat Tampa for a split of their

four-game series that left the teams tied atop the AL wild-card race. The Rangers won the season series with the Rays 4-3, earning home-field advantage should the teams finish in tie for the two wild-card spots. They each



Boston Red Sox's John Lackey pitches in the first inning of a baseball game against the Baltimore Orioles in Boston, Thursday, Sept. 19, 2013.

Associated Press

have 10 games left. The Indians, meanwhile, pulled within a half-game of the leaders by beating Houston 2-1 in 11 innings. Cleveland has nine remaining. Yu Darvish won for the first time in seven starts since Aug. 12. Darvish (13-9)

made it through five innings despite walking six. Mitch Moreland, Andrus and Alex Rios homered off Matt Moore in the third inning to put the Rangers ahead to stay. Craig Gentry had four of the Rangers' 16 hits and

Carson's single with two outs in the 11th inning gave Cleveland the win as it closed within a half-game in the AL wild card race. Yan Gomes singled with one out against Rhiner Cruz (0-2), and Asdrubal Cabrera reached on an infield single. Trevor Crowe caught Michael Brantley's liner to center and nearly doubled Gomes off second, and Mike Aviles loaded the bases with a walk. Carson hit a grounder under the glove of second baseman Jose Altuve for Cleveland's 10th walkoff win this season. Tampa Bay and Texas (83-69) are tied for the two wild cards. Bryan Shaw (5-3) pitched the 11th for the win. The Astros lost their sixth straight. Cleveland's Nick Swisher matched a career high with four hits.
BLUE JAYS 6, YANKEES 2
TORONTO (AP) — The New York Yankees lost for the fifth time in six games and are in danger of missing the playoffs for only the second time in 19 seasons. Hiroki Kuroda lost his fifth straight decision, allowing two runs in the third inning and a solo home run to

Anthony Gose in the sixth. Adam Lind added a three-run homer in the seventh off Joba Chamberlain. New York, which dropped 3½ games back for the second AL wild-card berth, lost two of three in Toronto while scoring just six runs and hitting .198 (19 for 96). New York won 12 of its first 13 games against Toronto this year but lost four of its final six. Kuroda allowed three runs and eight hits in six innings with four walks and seven strikeouts. Rookie Todd Redmond (4-2) gave up one run and four hits in a career-high seven innings with seven strikeouts and a walk. Casey Jansen relieved with the bases loaded and one out in the ninth, then finished for his 32nd save in 34 chances.
TIGERS 5, MARINERS 4
DETROIT (AP) — Prince Fielder had three hits and scored the tiebreaking run in the seventh inning on a close play at the plate for Detroit. **In other AL games it was Oakland 8, Minnesota 6; Detroit 5, Seattle 4; Toronto 6, N. Y. Yankees 2; Cleveland 2, Houston 1 in 11 innings; Texas 8, Tampa Bay 2; and Boston 3, Baltimore 1.** □

Andy Pettitte

Continued from Page 18

Baseball's career saves leader also is retiring. "One of the things I struggled with in making this announcement now was doing anything to take away from Mariano's day on Sunday," Pettitte said. "It is his day. He means so much to me, and has meant so much to my career that I would just hate to somehow take the attention away from him." Rivera has saved 72 of Pettitte's 255 career wins, the most for any set of teammates in major league history. Pettitte holds MLB records for postseason wins (19) and starts (44), but it would take quite a surge by the Yankees for him to get an opportunity to add to those marks. They began the day 3 1/2 games behind Tampa Bay and

Texas for the second AL wild card, with three other teams in between. A three-time All-Star, Pettitte has helped New York to seven AL pennants and five World Series championships during 15 seasons in pinstripes. He was the MVP of the 2001 AL championship series and is the franchise leader in career strikeouts with 2,009. He joined old buddies Rivera, Derek Jeter and Jorge Posada to make up the "Core Four" that has led the Yankees to more than a decade and a half of sustained success. Jeter, limited by injuries to just 17 games this season, will be the only one left next year. "I'm announcing my retirement prior to the conclusion of our season because I want all of our fans to know now - while I'm still wearing this uniform - how grateful I am for their sup-



New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte delivers the ball to the Boston Red Sox during the first inning of a baseball game at Yankee Stadium, Friday, Sept. 6, 2013, in New York.

Associated Press

port throughout my career," Pettitte said. "I want to have the opportunity to tip my cap to them during these remaining days and thank them for making my time here with the Yankees so special." Pettitte is 10-10 with a 3.93

ERA in 28 starts this season. After a rough patch, he has pitched particularly well down the stretch with New York desperately chasing a playoff berth. His final start is scheduled for next weekend against Houston, the only team

Pettitte has played for besides the Yankees. He spent 2004-06 with the Astros, teaming with Roger Clemens to help the club make its only trip to the World Series in 2005. Selected by the Yankees in the 22nd round of the 1990 draft, Pettitte is 255-152 with a 3.86 ERA in 18 big league seasons. That makes him one of 26 pitchers - the only one still active - with a record at least 100 games over .500. Eighteen of those pitchers are in the Hall of Fame. Pettitte is 19-11 with a 3.81 ERA in the postseason, giving him more postseason wins than eight major league teams. He also ranks first in postseason innings (276 2-3) and second in strikeouts (183). In 2009 with the Yankees, he became the first pitcher to start and win the clinching game of all three series in one postseason. □

NL Capsules

Dodgers wrap up NL West title

The Associated Press PHOENIX (AP) — PHOENIX (AP) — The Los Angeles Dodgers became the first team to clinch a spot in the postseason, wrapping up their first NL West title since 2009 when they rallied past Arizona 7-6 on Thursday. Despite an NL-high payroll of \$214 million-plus on opening day, the Dodgers got off to a 30-42 start and were last in the division, 9½ games behind the first-place Diamondbacks, before play on June 22. Los Angeles has gone 58-23 since.

The Dodgers trailed 6-3 in the sixth and A.J. Ellis hit a tiebreaking homer off Josh Collmenter (4-4) leading off the eighth.

J.P. Howell (2-1) got two outs for the victory.

Hanley Ramirez, who sat out five of the last six games with an irritated nerve in his lower back, hit a three-run homer in the third inning and a tying solo shot in the seventh. It was his 13th career multihomer game and first since Aug. 18 of last year.

The Dodgers had lost nine of 12 and five of six entering Thursday.

PIRATES 10, PADRES 1

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Neil Walker had four hits and drove in three runs to help

the Pirates stop a three-game losing streak.

Pedro Alvarez hit his NL-leading 34th homer for Pittsburgh, while Jose Tabata added two hits and three RBIs as the Pirates moved a game in front of Cincinnati for the top wild card spot in the NL. The rivals begin a three-game series in Pittsburgh on Friday.

Pittsburgh moved within one game of first-place St. Louis in the NL Central.

Gerrit Cole (9-7) struck out a career-high 12 while allowing one run and four hits in six innings.

Pittsburgh scored four runs total while losing three straight games to the Padres but scored five in the fourth against Ian Kennedy (6-10). Alvarez homered to center with one out to give Pittsburgh the lead.

NATIONALS 3, MARLINS 2 WASHINGTON (AP) — Bryce Harper hit a three-run homer to support an effective pitching performance by Gio Gonzalez, helping Washington keep alive its slim hope of reaching the playoffs.

Despite winning 11 of 13 in a belated run, the Nationals trail Cincinnati by five games for the final NL wild-card slot with nine games remaining.

Denard Span went 0 for 4



The Los Angeles Dodgers celebrate clinching the NL West title with a 7-6 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks in a baseball game Thursday, Sept. 19, 2013, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

for Washington, ending his hitting streak at 29 games — one short of the Nationals record. He was bidding to become the 27th player to have a 30-game hitting streak since Joe DiMaggio had his 56-game run in 1941.

Gonzalez (11-7) allowed two runs and seven hits over six innings to improve to 3-0 against Miami this season. He struck out three, lifting his team-high total to 186.

Rafael Soriano got three outs for his 42nd save.

Harper's 20th homer of the season came in the first inning off Henderson Alvarez (4-5).

ROCKIES 7, CARDINALS 6,

15 innings

DENVER (AP) — Corey Dickerson's RBI triple with one out in the bottom of the 15th inning gave Colorado the win.

Charlie Blackmon finished with four hits and Troy Tulowitzki and Todd Helton homered for the Rockies in tying the second-longest game in Coors Field history. Matt Holliday had three hits for the Cardinals, who had their NL Central Division lead over Pittsburgh trimmed to one game. The Pirates beat San Diego 10-1 on Thursday.

DJ LeMahieu started the winning rally with a one-out single to right. Dickerson then drilled a line drive into

the right-field corner. The relay from second baseman Matt Carpenter beat LeMahieu but catcher Yadier Molina couldn't control the ball as LeMahieu crawled to touch home.

It was Dickerson's second triple of the game and sixth of the season.

In the first inning, Helton tagged out Carpenter at first with the hidden-ball trick. After Roy Oswalt threw to first, Helton feigned a throw back to the mound and tagged Carpenter when he stepped off the bag to end the inning.

The Cardinals loaded the bases in the 15th but Pete Kozma hit into a double play to end the inning. □

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US stocks drop as investors fret over budget fight

JOSHUA FREED

AP Business Writer

Washington's budget fight jolted Wall Street on Friday, reminding it that the next few weeks could bring a lot of uncertainty.

Investors hate uncertainty, and stocks plunged in afternoon sell-off that wiped out all the gains from rally earlier this week, when the Federal Reserve kept its huge economic stimulus program intact.

Major indexes were mixed in morning trading, but turned lower around mid-day after the U.S. House of Representatives voted to defund President Barack Obama's health care law. The vote itself wasn't a surprise, but it reminded investors that the Republican-led House and the Democratic-controlled Senate are poised for a showdown over federal spending.

The debt ceiling must be raised by Oct. 1 to avoid a government shutdown,

and a potential default on payments, including debt, later in the month.

"What we've done is basically committed ourselves to two weeks of worry," said Sam Stovall, chief equity strategist at S&P Capital IQ.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 185.46 points, or 1.2 percent, to close at 15,451.09 — 225 points below its all-time closing high reached Wednesday after the Fed's announcement.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 12.43 points, or 0.7 percent, to 1,709.91. The Nasdaq composite fell 14.66 points, or 0.4 percent, to 3,774.73. All 10 industry groups in the S&P 500 fell, led lower by telecom companies and utilities. The S&P also fell on Thursday, making this its first two-day decline in almost three weeks. Until now, September defied the worriers. The stock market has bounced

backed from an August swoon, despite a calendar loaded with potential rally killers.

Fears of a conflict with Syr-

ia have faded, and Wall Street cheered when Larry Summers withdrew his name as a candidate to replace Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke.



Traders Stephen Mara, left, and Edward Schreier work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Washington's budget fight jolted Wall Street on Friday, reminding it that the next few weeks could bring a lot of uncertainty.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Summers, a former Trea-

sury secretary, was viewed as being more likely to rein in the Fed's massive stimulus program, which has kept interest rates low and

boosted corporate profits. As Middle East strife recedes from investors' minds, though, fears of budget gridlock grow.

"Geopolitics ... is much lower on the list. It's not off the list" of investor worries, said David Darst, chief investment strategist for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management.

"No. 1 becomes the debt ceiling and the federal spending debate." In corporate news, BlackBerry plunged \$1.79, or 17 percent, to \$8.72 on the Nasdaq after announcing a loss of nearly \$1 billion and layoffs of 4,500 workers. The company's phones have been eclipsed by phones from Apple and Samsung. Apple fell \$4.89, or 1 percent, to close at \$467.40 as its newest iPhone debuted at stores.

Darden, the struggling parent of Olive Garden and Red Lobster, fell \$3.52, or 7 percent, to \$45.78 after posting a much lower quarterly profit and saying its president and chief operating officer will retire. Sales fell at its two flagship restaurant chains despite efforts to renew menus and advertising. □



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STREET BRIEFS

Goodyear Tire renews dividend, starting buyback

NEW YORK (AP) — Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. is reinstating its quarterly dividend after more than a decade. It is also starting a buyback of up to \$100 million.

The tire company last paid a dividend on its common stock in December 2002. Shares climbed in premarket trading on Friday.

Goodyear is declaring a dividend of 5 cents per share.

The dividend will be paid on Dec. 1 to shareholders of record on Nov. 1. Future dividends will be subject to board approval.

The company also said that it anticipates positive cash flow through 2016, excluding prefunding its pension.

Goodyear, based in the U.S., has 52 facilities in 22 countries. Its shares gained \$1.09, or 4.9 percent, to \$23.32 before the market open. □

Rocket Fuel Inc. soars in 1st day of public trading

NEW YORK (AP) — Shares of Rocket Fuel took off during its first day as a publicly traded company.

The technology company's stock more than doubled, reaching \$62.40 in Friday trading before falling back slightly to \$55.35, a jump of \$26.35 or 90 percent.

The initial public offering of 4 million shares priced at \$29 each, at the high end of the expected price range of \$27 to \$29 per share.

Rocket Fuel Inc., which focuses on artificial intelligence, raised \$116 million from the offering.

It is giving the underwriters a 30-day option to buy up to an additional 600,000 shares to cover any excess demand.

The stock is trading on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the "FUEL" ticker symbol. □

BlackBerry previews big loss, to cut 4,500 workers

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — BlackBerry said Friday that it will lay off 4,500 employees, or 40 percent of its global workforce, as it reports a nearly \$1 billion second-quarter loss a week earlier than the results were expected.

Shares were halted pending the news and plunged as low as \$8.01 when the stock reopened for trading. Shares regained some ground to close down 17 percent at \$8.72.

BlackBerry had been scheduled to release earnings next week. But the Canadian company said late Friday afternoon that it expects to post a staggering loss of \$950 million to \$995 million for the quarter, including a massive \$930 million to \$960 million write down of the value of its inventory due to increasing competition. Revenue of \$1.6 billion is only about half of the \$3 billion that analysts expected, according to FactSet. The company's expected adjusted loss of 47 cents to 51 cents per share falls far below the loss of 16 cents per share projected by Wall Street.

BlackBerry said it wants to slash operating costs in half by the first quarter of 2015 so cutting its global headcount to 7,000 total employees is necessary. The company let 5,000 people go last year.

"We are implementing

the difficult, but necessary operational changes announced today to address our position in a maturing and more competitive industry, and to drive the

unveiled new phones running a revamped operating system called BlackBerry 10. The much-delayed touchscreen Z10 and keyboard Q10 were designed

back to competing mainly for the business customers most loyal to its brand. The company said it plans to focus on offering only two high-end devices and two



People walk past BlackBerry's headquarters in Waterloo, Ontario, in Canada. BlackBerry said Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, it will lay off 4,500 employees, or 40 percent of its global workforce, and is announcing a nearly \$1 billion second-quarter loss in a surprise early release of earnings.

(AP Photo/Geoff Robins)

company toward profitability," Thorsten Heins, President and CEO of BlackBerry, said in a statement.

The BlackBerry, pioneered in 1999, was the dominant smartphone for on-the-go business people and other customers before Apple debuted the iPhone in 2007. Since then, BlackBerry Ltd. has been hammered by competition from the iPhone as well as Android-based rivals like Samsung.

In January, the company

to better compete for customers and rejuvenate the brand. But the phones failed to turn the company around. BlackBerry's market share continues to lag its rivals.

BlackBerry said last month that it would consider selling itself. The Waterloo, Ontario-based company reiterated Friday that a special committee of its board of directors continues to evaluate all options. It also seemed to say Friday that it would shift its focus

entry-level handsets going forward, with emphasis on the enterprise market.

"Going forward, we plan to refocus our offering on our end-to-end solution of hardware, software and services for enterprises and the productive, professional end user," said Heins. "This puts us squarely on target with the customers that helped build BlackBerry into the leading brand today for enterprise security, manageability and reliability." □

US official: Fed could slow bond buys in October

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A voting member of the Federal Reserve says the Fed could start to reduce its bond purchases as early as the next meeting in October, if the economy shows improvement. James Bullard, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, told Bloomberg television Friday that it was a "close decision" not to slow the \$85-billion-a-month in bond buying at the Sept. 17-18 meeting. He said stronger data before the Oct. 29-30 meeting could make Fed

officials "comfortable with a small taper in October."

The bond purchases are intended to keep long-term interest rates low, encouraging more borrowing, spending and growth.

Bullard also noted that not having a news conference scheduled next month doesn't represent an obstacle to Fed action at the October meeting. The Fed could easily schedule one, if it felt it needed to explain a decision — such as voting to reduce the purchases.

In a separate interview later Friday with Fox Business, Bullard stressed that

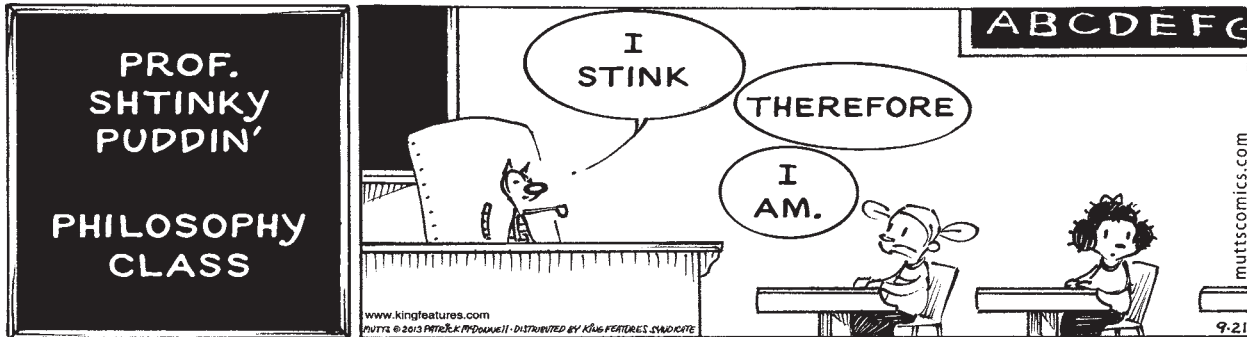
he was not predicting that the Fed would move to cut bond purchases at its October meeting. He said that it could happen if the data shows the economy has strengthened. But he said an argument could also be made that the Fed panel will not have that much additional information by then to change its mind.

Bullard rejected criticism that the Fed's action to delay a move in September had confused markets.

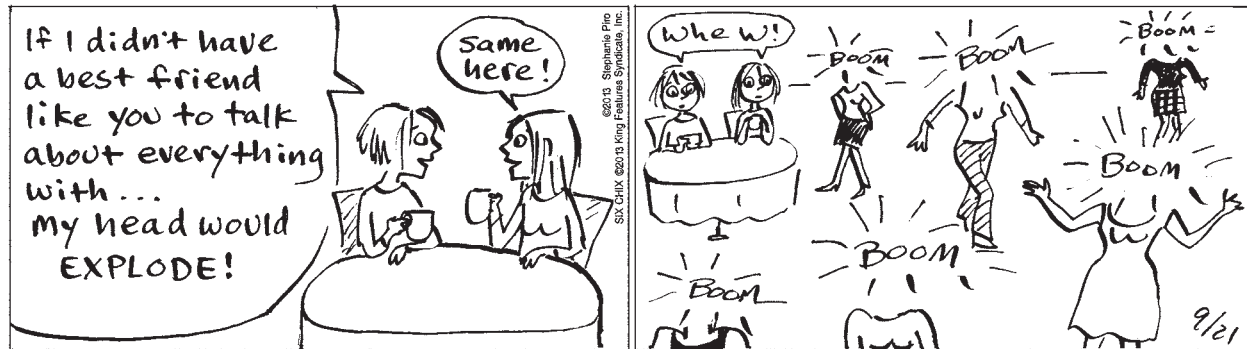
"We said it was a data dependent decision. It turned out to be a data dependent decision," Bullard told

Fox Business. Bullard also gave a speech Friday in New York in which he said the Fed's action this week shows its basing its decision on incoming data, not a set schedule. During the speech, Bullard noted that financial markets have reacted sharply to the Fed's comments about the bond purchases, showing critics are wrong that the Fed is having little impact. Stocks plunged after Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke indicated in June that the Fed could slow them later this year, if the economy improved. □

Mutts



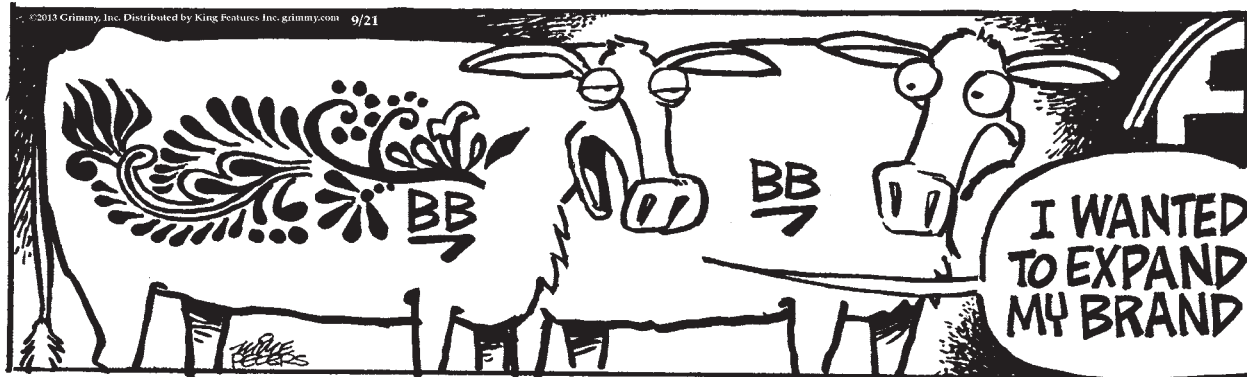
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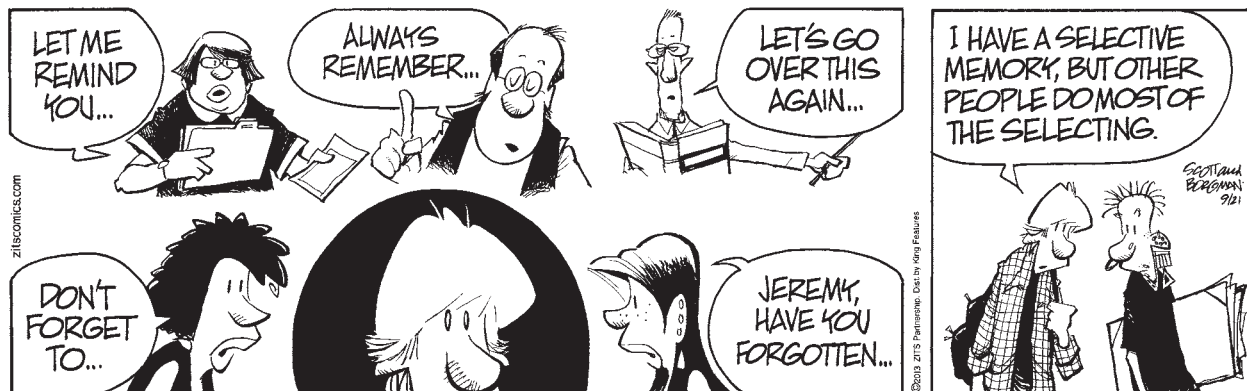
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

				1	5			6
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	8					4		
				8				1
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Difficulty Level ★★☆☆

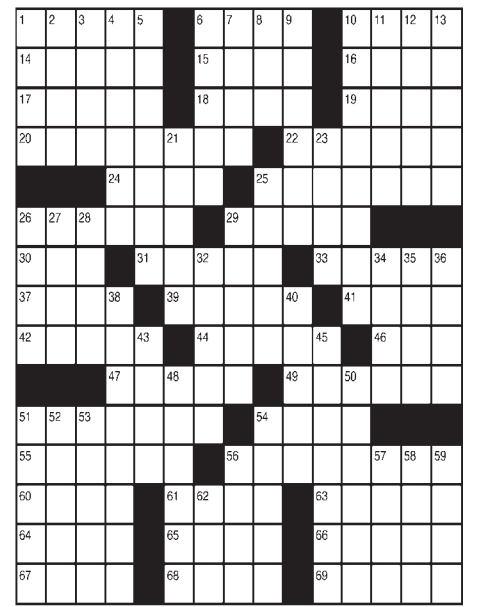
9/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer	5	8	3	6	9	7	4	1	2
	1	7	6	4	2	8	5	9	3
	9	2	4	1	3	5	8	7	6
	3	5	1	2	4	9	6	8	7
	2	6	9	8	7	3	1	5	4
	7	4	8	5	1	6	2	3	9
	4	9	5	3	8	2	7	6	1
	6	3	2	7	5	1	9	4	8
	8	1	7	9	6	4	3	2	5

ACROSS

- 1 Robes for women of India
6 Slightly open
10 Singing voice
14 Cessna or 747
15 ___ Scotia
16 Actress Amanda ___
17 "___ Blue Gown"
18 Khrushchev's "No!"
19 Breathe heavily
20 Summary
22 Few and far between
24 Small rodents
25 Funeral attendee
26 Greek goddess of wisdom
29 Explorer ___ de León
30 Tax-deferred retirement acct.
31 Feel malicious satisfaction
33 Gin rummy player's move
37 Injure
39 Ambassador
41 Saga
42 Waffle topper
44 Watery portion of the blood
46 Pull hard
47 More devious
49 Smooches
51 Bewitch; charm
54 "___ Be Cruel"; Elvis song
55 In back of
56 Scalp flakes
60 Soft cheese
61 Frosted
63 Ravi Shankar's instrument
64 Arden & Plumb
65 Incite; egg on
66 Sidestep
67 Skillful
68 "For Your Eyes ___"; 007 movie
69 Sound of a giggle
DOWN
1 Jacuzzis



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

9/21/13

Friday's Puzzle Solved

RIDE	STEAL	HIDE
AREA	HASTE	ABED
ROAR	APPETIZING	
END	EVEN	CASTE
RIVER	SIR	
WHINES	WILDER	
HINTS	EMILY	MAR
ERGO	SWIFT	BANE
TEE	SUEDE	GONGS
DRAWER	FAUCET	
SAT	TUTTI	
CHASM	RISE	PEG
RECEPTIONS	KAYE	
ARMS	ADAGE	ITEM
BEES	JONES	MESS

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9/21/13

- 38 Most lovey-dovey
40 Canada's ___ Territory
43 ___ out; arrange beforehand
45 Attitude
48 Blue dye
50 Try hard
51 Waned
52 Chutzpah
53 Tribal leader
54 Papa
56 Great buy
57 Orem's state
58 Lose color
59 On the loose
62 Jailbird

Backlash to American invasion of the Booker Prize

STEVEN ERLANGER

© 2013 New York Times

LONDON - The Americans are coming, and the British literary world is not happy. The Man Booker Prize, which had been open to English-language novels from Britain and the Commonwealth, has just gone global, producing anxiety about damage to cultural diversity and fears that the U.S. cultural hyperpower that dominates movies and television will crush the small literary novel.

"It's rather like a British company being taken over by some worldwide conglomerate," said Melvyn Bragg, an author and television host in Britain.

The Booker Prize for fiction, begun in 1969, was always something that Britain and its former territories could call their own, seen as a bulwark against the spread of the American novel, that globalized product of the world's richest market. The award - with its publicity, its paycheck and its immediate effect on sales - has been an important boost to the careers of Canadians like Michael Ondaatje and Yann Martel and Indians like Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga. It has brought attention to novelists previously unknown and unpublished in the United States, and it has been an important encouragement to publishers of quality fiction.

This week, the chairman of the Booker Prize Foundation, Jonathan Taylor, said, "We are abandoning the constraints of geography and national boundaries" to become a truly international prize, as a result of consultations that began in 2011. The change could enhance the Booker's "prestige and reputation through expansion, rather than by setting up a separate prize" for Americans, he said.

Next year the prize will be open to anyone writing in English, not just citizens of Britain, the Commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe, bringing immediate concerns that American novels will dominate "simply through an economic

superpower exerting its own literary tastes," the British novelist Philip Hensher, who has been both a Booker finalist and a judge, said in an interview. More troubling, he said, will be the loss of "new, inter-



Jhumpa Lahiri, whose novel "The Lowland," is shortlisted for the newly globalized Man Booker Prize, in an undated handout photo. The possibility of an American author winning the award is brewing discontent among the British literary world. (Elena Seibert via The New York Times)

esting voices." American novels are already culturally dominant, he said. "It's hard to think of American novels that don't make their way into the larger English world, but I can think of Canadian, Indian, African novels that struggle to find a broader readership."

Criticism of the prize has been a literary sport since its inception, with complaints about the winners, the judges and even the prize dinners. A.L. Kennedy, who was a judge in 1996, famously and ungrammatically said that the winner was determined by "who knows who, who's sleeping with who, who's selling drugs to who, who's married to who, whose turn it is." Kennedy is in favor of the expansion of the Booker, however, noting that other, newer prizes open to any English-language novel published here, like the Folio Prize (40,000 pounds, or about \$64,000, which makes its first award next January) and the International Impac Dublin

Literary Award (100,000 euros, or about \$135,000, and also open to translations) have been "nipping at its heels." The Man Booker award comes with a prize of 60,000 pounds.

The Booker has also become less literary, some argue, suggesting that since the Man Group, a multinational financial company, took it over in 2002, the re-named Man Booker Prize has become more middle-brow. Even this year, one of the six finalists, Jhumpa Lahiri's "Lowland," has been criticized as an American novel. Born in London, Lahiri moved to the United States at the age of 2 and generally writes about the experience of exiles living in the U.S.

Part of the effect of the Booker comes from the publication of a "long list" of semifinalists and then a "shortlist" of six finalists, both of which bring atten-

tion to younger writers unlikely to win and to smaller publishers. The concern is that these lists will be dominated by U.S. novelists, driving out others, diminishing the chances of a broader public discovering something daring, unfamiliar or new. Since the judges are still required, at least in principle, to read every entry, publishers will now be allowed to nominate only one novel, rather than two, which means that smaller publishers will have fewer chances to get on a shortlist. Exceptions are made for publishers that have had a finalist in the last five years. "It means the prize will be dominated by big publishing houses who maybe aren't taking as many risks," Anne Meadows, an editor at Granta Books, told the BBC. "Good novels will be overlooked." □

DOCTOR ON DUTY Oranjestad



Dr. Anthony

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Climate report struggles with temperature quirks

KARL RITTER

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Scientists working on a landmark U.N. report on climate change are struggling over how to address a wrinkle in the meteorological data that has given ammunition to global-warming skeptics: The heating of Earth's surface appears to have slowed in the past 15 years even though greenhouse gas emissions keep rising. For years, skeptics have touted what looks like a slowdown in surface warming since 1998 to cast doubt on the scientific consensus that humans are cooking the planet by burning coal, oil and natural gas.

Scientists and statisticians have dismissed the purported slowdown as a statistical mirage, arguing among other things that it reflects random climate fluctuations and an unusually hot year picked as the starting point for charting temperatures. They also say the data suggests the "missing" heat is simply settling — temporarily — in the ocean.

But as scientists study the issue, the notion of a slowdown has gained more mainstream attention, putting pressure on the authors of the new U.N. report to deal with it.

The Intergovernmental

Panel on Climate Change report is expected to assert that global warming is continuing. It is also expected to affirm with greater certainty than ever before the link between global warming and human activity.

Leaked documents obtained by The Associated Press show there are deep concerns among governments over how to address the purported slowdown ahead of next week's meeting of the IPCC.

"I think to not address it would be a problem because then you basically have the denialists saying, 'Look, the IPCC is silent on this issue,'" said Alden Meyer of the Washington-based advocacy group Union of Concerned Scientists. In a leaked June draft of the report's summary for policymakers, the IPCC said that while the rate of warming between 1998 and 2012 was about half the average rate since 1951, the globe is still heating up. As for the apparent slowdown, it cited natural variability in the climate system, as well as cooling effects from volcanic eruptions and a downward phase in solar activity.

But in comments to the IPCC obtained by the AP, several governments that reviewed the draft objected to how the issue was



In this July 19, 2007 file photo an iceberg melts off Ammassalik Island in Eastern Greenland.

Associated Press

tackled.

Germany called for the reference to the slowdown to be deleted, saying a time span of 10 to 15 years was misleading in the context of climate change, which is measured over decades and centuries.

The U.S. also urged the authors to include the "leading hypothesis" that the reduction in warming is linked to more heat being transferred to the deep ocean.

Belgium objected to using 1998 as a starting year for any statistics. That year was

exceptionally warm, so any graph showing global temperatures starting with 1998 looks flat. Using 1999 or 2000 as a starting year would yield a more upward-pointing curve. In fact, every year after 2000 has been warmer than the year 2000.

Hungary worried the report would provide ammunition for skeptics.

Many skeptics claim that the rise in global average temperatures stopped in the late 1990s, and their argument has gained momentum among some media and politicians, even though the scientific evidence of climate change is piling up: The previous decade was the warmest on record and, so far, this decade is even warmer, albeit slightly. Meanwhile, Arctic sea ice shrank to a record low last year, and the IPCC draft said sea levels have risen by 7.5 inches (19 centimeters) since 1901. Many researchers say the slowdown in warming is related to the natural ocean warming and cooling cycles known as El Nino and La Nina. Also, a 2013 study by Kevin Trenberth at the National Center for Atmospheric Research found dramatic recent warming in the deeper oceans, between 2,300 and 6,500 feet. "The heat is not missing," said University of Victo-

ria climate scientist Andrew Weaver, who is also a Green Party member of the British Columbia parliament. "The heat is there. The heat is in the ocean."

The idea is that the energy trapped by carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases has to go somewhere on Earth, said Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer. But that heat energy will eventually make its way to the ocean surface and the air, putting surface warming back on the increasing track, he said.

"Energy will hide out in the ocean for a while before it pops out into the atmosphere," Oppenheimer said.

For scientists studying the last 10 years, what's been happening "is a cool question," said U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientist Gabriel Vecchi. But "anybody who tries to use the past 10 years to argue about the reality of global warming — which is based upon century-scale data — is just being distracting."

Jonathan Lynn, a spokesman for the IPCC, declined to comment on the content of the report because it hasn't been made final, but said it would provide "a comprehensive picture of all the science relevant to climate change." □

Arctic sea ice 6th lowest, but rebounds from 2012

SETH BORENSTEIN

AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The amount of ice in the Arctic Ocean shrank this summer to the sixth lowest level, but that is much higher than last year's record low.

The ice cap at the North Pole melts in the summer and grows in winter; its general shrinking trend is a sign of global warming. The National Snow and Ice Data Center said Friday that Arctic ice was at 1.97 million square miles (5.1 million sq. kilometers) when it stopped melting late last week.

It takes scientists several days to confirm sea ice hit reached its lowest level and is growing again.

The minimum level reached this summer is about 24 percent below the 20th Century average, but 50 percent above last year when a dramatic melt shattered records that go back to 1979.

Center director Mark Serreze says cooler air triggered a "considerable recovery," from last year, while the ocean temperatures were still warmer than normal. But he adds cli-

mate change deniers who point to the bounce back from last year — which skewed the trend — would be wrong.

"If you threw out last year, this year would be very much in line of what we've seen in recent years," Serreze says. "We are not seeing a long term recovery here. No way."

Overall, since 1979 Arctic sea ice has been shrinking at a "pretty darn big" rate of about 12 percent a year and "this is not going to reverse your trend, not in the least," Serreze says. □

Chita Rivera plans to 'sweat' for her birthday

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Chita Rivera had wanted to celebrate her 80th birthday quietly, no fuss. That clearly wasn't going to happen.

"I think I can ask anybody out on the street, 'How old is Chita Rivera?' and they'd know. There's an awful lot of noise about it," says the actress. "That's not the way I intended it to be."

So, true to form for the multi-talented, always hardworking Tony Award winner, Rivera will celebrate by giving back: She's preparing a one-night-only Broadway concert to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. "Since it's out there, let's make some money," says Rivera, laughing.

The Oct. 7 show at the August Wilson Theatre will feature Rivera backed by a full orchestra singing songs from her hits and telling stories. It's written by Terrence

McNally and directed by Graciela Daniele. Guests will include Tommy Tune and Ben Vereen.

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, one of the nation's leading nonprofit AIDS fundraising and grant-making organizations, initially considered honoring Rivera by putting on a show in her honor. She balked, intent on "giving some sweat" herself.

The actress, who actually turned 80 in January, doesn't take herself too seriously. The show is called "Chita: A Legendary Celebration," but Rivera jokes: "I'm getting closer and closer to a fairy tale."

Rivera, who was onstage this year in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," originated some of theater's most memorable roles, including Anita in 1957's "West Side Story," Rose in 1960's "Bye Bye Birdie," Velma in 1975's "Chicago" and the title



In this Aug. 19, 2009 file photo, Chita Rivera is shown during an interview in New York. Rivera will celebrate her 80th birthday with a one-night-only Broadway concert to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Associated Press

role in 1993's "Kiss of the Spider Woman," the second of her two Tony Award wins. All will play a part in

her show. "When you're lucky enough to have a 'West Side' and a 'Spider Woman' and a 'Can-Can' and 'A Dancer's Life' and 'Chicago' and 'Nine' — when you've had that kind of luck to have been able to do those kinds of things, you've got a really nice library," she says. "You know when you have a fabulous experience? Seldom are we allowed to go visit it again. I'm able to do that." She also has plenty of stories to tell, from a near-fatal car accident to shows that failed. "I don't really have bad memories. Even the bombs that I did are something you learn from and they become funny now," she says. Stephen Flaherty, who with Lynn Ahrens co-wrote two songs from Rivera's autobiographical show, "Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life," is in awe: "She's unstoppable," he says. □

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Mark Harmon just part of the gang on unstoppable 'NCIS'

FRAZIER MOORE

AP Television Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Life comes with few chances to witness a fundamental law being turned on its head. But last season 18.5 million viewers did just that every week, tuning to "NCIS" to certify it as one of TV's highest-rated shows and, even more impressively, make it

a series whose audience after 10 seasons has expanded, not shriveled, with age.

"NCIS," which averaged 11.8 million viewers its first season back in 2003-04, grew by more than a million viewers last year alone. This, of course, contradicts TV's natural order.

"NCIS" (which starts its 11th

season Tuesday at 8 p.m. EDT on CBS) seems to have a long-term lease on TV's fountain of youth.

It doesn't hurt that "NCIS" maintains an absorbing, go-down-easy recipe of drama, character and humor that no other show is able to match.

"We've been successful so far," says series star Mark



This publicity image released by CBS shows Mark Harmon in a scene from "NCIS." Last season 18.5 million viewers tuned into "NCIS" to certify it as one of TV's highest-rated shows and, even more impressively, make it a series whose audience after 10 seasons has expanded, not shriveled, with age.

Associated Press

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Harmon with some understatement, "and we keep finding ways to grow it." But don't go laying too much credit for that growth, or any other metric of success, at Harmon's feet.

He's the star, of course, playing tormented but intrepid Leroy Jethro Gibbs, Special Agent in Charge of the military's Major Case Response Team.

Harmon is surrounded by a sturdy troupe of actors including fellow charter cast members Michael Weatherly (NCIS Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo), David McCallum (Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard) and the wildly popular Pauley Perrette (as Goth lab rat Abby Sciuto).

"There's four of us who were there in the beginning, plus pretty much 90 percent of our crew," says Harmon, citing the stability of the show's production team as one key reason for its continued robustness.

Granted, there have been comings and goings. This summer, "NCIS" fans were shocked to learn that Cote de Pablo was exiting after eight seasons.

The new season's first two episodes give her character, Special Agent Ziva David, a dramatic send-off.

"We wish Cote well," says Harmon.

"But for those of us still here, it's all about moving on: 'This is what we've got, and we're going to find a way to make it even better.'

"I'm not trying to shuck off our success, because it's all

earned, every bit of it. By a lot of people."

Thus does Harmon reaffirm his one-for-all-and-all-for-one manifesto.

"I'm not the big dog," he says flatly. "I might be a dog. But there's a lot of dogs."

Now 62, Harmon is an unlikely TV superstar.

His manner during a recent interview is friendly but crisp, soft-spoken and firmly self-effacing. With his pretty-boy looks matured in middle age, this is the all-grown-up version of the star quarterback at UCLA who, after brief turns in law school, advertising and selling shoes, set his sights anew on acting and made good.

He forged a solid career in a succession of TV series, including "Reasonable Doubts," "Chicago Hope" and "St. Elsewhere," where, nearly 30 years ago, he played the first prime-time hero to contract, and die of, AIDS.

His films include "The Presidio," "Natural Born Killers" and "Freaky Friday."

Still, the man crowned as "the greatest actor who ever lived" by "Family Guy" cartoon aesthete Peter Griffin never reached the top tier of show-biz, even as he weathered accolades like People magazine's "Sexiest Man Alive" in 1986. And, as with most actors, he has also suffered setbacks, such as his ABC private-eye drama "Charlie Grace," which lasted little more than a month in 1995. □

World War O



GAIL COLLINS

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The war against Obamacare: All the rationality of a Justin Bieber fan riot, and all the restraint of "Saw VI."

On Wednesday, leaders of the House of Representatives announced their plans for a 42nd and 43rd vote to thwart the new health care reform law. If they don't get their way, they're threatening to defund the government and crack the debt ceiling.

"The law is a train wreck," said Speaker John Boehner. The majority leader, Eric Cantor, said someone had to protect middle-class families from "its horrific effects."

The arrival of Obamacare is worse than an invasion of giant zombies swinging nuclear-tipped crocodiles! Yet it lives! If only we lived in a country where citizens had the power to turn things around by voting lawmakers out of office. Like Uruguay or Latvia. Seriously, people, why do you think the Republicans have gone so completely lunatic when it comes to this issue? Why do they behave as if, once the health law begins to roll out, it will be cemented in place like an amendment to the Constitution?

True, it would be a pain to repeal the whole thing if it doesn't work out. But not a pain sufficient to wreak havoc on the global economy like, say, refusing to raise the debt ceiling. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas has been leading the push to shut down the government unless Congress repeals Obamacare. But have you ever heard him vow that if Congress doesn't repeal Obamacare there will be ... elections and then a new Congress that will repeal Obamacare?

Actually, Ted Cruz has an answer for this. Once the law goes into effect, he told the website The Daily Caller, the public will be overwhelmed by its sugary sweetness - "hooked on the subsidies." It's the duty of Congress to take it back before people can taste it, just the way New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg tried to whisk away high-calorie Big Gulps.

So, the message is clear. The new health care law is going to be terrible, wreaking havoc on American families, ruining their lives. And they are going to love it so much they will never have the self-control necessary to give it up.

So the war goes on. No issue is too big to ignore in the name of Obamacare repeal. None is too small. None is too unrelated. In the Senate, the latest victim was

a popular, useful bill on energy efficiency, whose happy march toward passage came screeching to a halt when a handful of Republicans tried to make it a vehicle for votes on you-know-what.

"This will be the most, the worst ..." sputtered Harry Reid, grasping for adjectives before settling on "the least productive Senate in the history of the country."

"Least productive" was fairer than "worst." After all, there was that session when somebody beat Sen. Charles Sumner half to death with a walking stick. Anyway, things are ridiculously awful.

The energy efficiency bill is the legislative version of a fluffy puppy. It was co-sponsored by Democrat Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Republican Rob Portman of Ohio. It involves helping manufacturers save money on energy use, and creating new model building codes, making plans and cooperating and studying. Portman and Shaheen have been working on it for three years.

"Energy efficiency is something everyone can agree to," said Shaheen in a phone interview. Well, possibly not everybody. It's hard to predict how the bill would fare in the House, where some people still haven't gotten over the Bush administration's decision to phase out incandescent light bulbs. But there were at least some signs of hope.

And things were going great in the Senate. The bill was approved 19-3 in committee. When it came up for debate on the floor, nobody even attempted to offer a parliamentary motion to hold up all progress indefinitely and then require 60 votes to move forward.

"Then," Shaheen said sadly, "Sen. Vitter objected." David Vitter, a Louisiana Republican, demanded a vote on his amendment to eliminate any health care subsidies for Congress. He was followed by the minority leader, Mitch McConnell, waiving a proposal to postpone an entire piece of the law. Reid refused to allow indefinite voting on Obamacare during the energy efficiency bill debate. The fluffy puppy was caged in the basement.

You do not want to know all the details of Vitter's motion. The original health care legislation stripped members of Congress and their staff of their traditional insurance coverage. Nobody would care if the members voted to cover themselves through policies available only on Nigerian Internet sites. But the staff is another matter. If the amendment passes, people like congressional clerical workers would be virtually the only Americans offered every possible disadvantage and none of the advantages of health care reform.

"It's to get them to recognize the pain that America's about to feel," said Sen. Mike Enzi of Wyoming.

Followed, of course, by delicious, addictive joy. □



The Crazy Party



PAUL KRUGMAN

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Early this year, Bobby Jindal, the governor of Louisiana, made headlines by telling his fellow Republicans that they needed to stop being the "stupid party." Unfortunately, Jindal failed to offer any constructive suggestions about how they might do that. And, in the months that followed, he himself proceeded to say and do a number of things that were, shall we say, not especially smart. Nonetheless, Republicans did follow his advice.

In recent months, the GOP seems to have transitioned from being the stupid party to being the crazy party.

I know, I'm being shrill. But as it grows increasingly hard to see how, in the face of Republican hysteria over health reform, we can avoid a government shutdown - and maybe the even more frightening prospect of a debt default - the time for euphemism is past.

It helps, I think, to understand just how unprecedented today's political climate really is.

Divided government in itself isn't unusual and is, in fact, more common than not. Since World War II, there have been 35 Congresses, and in only 13 of those cases did the president's party fully control the legislature.

Nonetheless, the U.S. government continued to function. Most of the time divided government led to compromise; sometimes to stalemate.

Nobody even considered the

possibility that a party might try to achieve its agenda, not through the constitutional process, but through blackmail - by threatening to bring the federal government, and maybe the whole economy, to its knees unless its demands were met.

True, there was the government shutdown of 1995. But this was widely recognized after the fact as both an outrage and a mistake. And that confrontation came just after a sweeping Republican victory in the midterm elections, allowing the GOP to make the case that it had a popular mandate to challenge what it imagined to be a crippled, lame-duck president.

Today, by contrast, Republicans are coming off an election in which they failed to retake the presidency despite a weak economy, failed to retake the Senate even though far more Democratic than Republican seats were at risk, and held the House only through a combination of gerrymandering and the vagaries of districting. Democrats actually won the popular ballot for the House by 1.4 million votes. This is not a party that, by any conceivable standard of legitimacy, has the right to make extreme demands on the president.

Yet, at the moment, it seems highly likely that the Republican Party will refuse to fund the government, forcing a shutdown at the beginning of next month, unless President Barack Obama dismantles the health reform that is the signature achievement of his presidency. Republican leaders realize that this is a bad idea, but, until recently, their notion of preaching moderation was to urge party radicals not to hold America hostage over the federal budget so they could wait a few weeks and hold it hostage over the debt ceiling instead. Now they've given up even on that delaying tactic.

The latest news is that John Boehner, the speaker of the House, has abandoned his efforts

to craft a face-saving climbdown on the budget, which means that we're all set for shutdown, possibly followed by debt crisis.

How did we get here? Some pundits insist, even now, that this is somehow Obama's fault.

Why can't he sit down with Boehner the way Ronald Reagan used to sit down with Tip O'Neill? But O'Neill didn't lead a party whose base demanded that he shut down the government unless Reagan revoked his tax cuts, and O'Neill didn't face a caucus prepared to depose him as speaker at the first hint of compromise.

No, this story is all about the GOP. First came the southern strategy, in which the Republican elite cynically exploited racial backlash to promote economic goals, mainly low taxes for rich people and deregulation. Over time, this gradually morphed into what we might call the crazy strategy, in which the elite turned to exploiting the paranoia that has always been a factor in American politics - Hillary killed Vince Foster! Obama was born in Kenya! Death panels! - to promote the same goals.

But now we're in a third stage, where the elite has lost control of the Frankenstein-like monster it created.

So now we get to witness the hilarious spectacle of Karl Rove in The Wall Street Journal, pleading with Republicans to recognize the reality that Obamacare can't be defunded.

Why hilarious? Because Rove and his colleagues have spent decades trying to ensure that the Republican base lives in an alternate reality defined by Rush Limbaugh and Fox News. Can we say "hoist with their own petard"? Of course, the coming confrontations are likely to damage America as a whole, not just the Republican brand.

But, you know, this political moment of truth was going to happen sooner or later. We might as well have it now. □

Computer Flaws Get Wry Smile From Humans Displaced

WILLIAM ALDEN

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After a technological breakdown froze the Nasdaq stock market for three hours last month, investors across Wall Street wrung their hands.

But Thomas H. Shafer allowed himself a bitter laugh. After all, he had forged a career as a stock exchange specialist - buying and selling shares to help the market function properly - only to have his profession sharply diminished by technology.

The mishaps have also led longtime former specialists like Shafer to reflect on the days before machines took over the market.

"There were times when the you-know-what hit the fan, and I feel we did a real good job with the human element," Shafer, 48, said. "That's what we were supposed to do - slow the process down so calmer heads can prevail."

Shafer's current vantage point on the markets is a world away from Van der Moolen, the specialist firm

investors large and small, making stock trading cheaper, faster and more efficient. But each technological malfunction provides fuel for critics who argue that today's market structure can allow digital errors to become disasters. In the past, such accidents would not make headlines, said Charles P. Dolan, a former specialist who was a colleague of Shafer.

"I will tell you that 99 percent of those orders, we gave them the opportunity to cancel," said Dolan, 49,

lean against the wind, acting as buyers and sellers of last resort.

The profits from this line of work could be bountiful. Specialists at the Big Board oversaw all trading in particular stocks, and they collected spreads of as much as 12.5 cents a share, represented as one-eighth of a dollar. Such princely rewards raised eyebrows.

New regulations, combined with the increased automation of the market, ushered in the extinction of the specialists.

"We were no longer making markets. We were really just moving the mouse around to run the programs making the markets," said Nelson, who co-founded Valuation Metrics, a San Francisco-based firm that helps companies find investors, after leaving Bear Wagner in 2009.

Nelson, 47, was able to harness advanced technology in his second career, buying the rights to software that his company uses to analyze investment portfolios. For many, the emotions are still raw. John J. Conklin III, who had the unpleasant task of cutting jobs when he was president of Bank of America's specialist unit, wrote a barb-filled essay for TheStreet.com in the wake of the flash crash in 2010, saying lawmakers and regulators had "sold their souls" in pursuit of faster trading.

And yet, the beneficiaries of the new system extol its virtues.

"You've gone from the jock culture that used to dominate the trading pits to more of a geek culture," said Manoj Narang, the chief executive of Tradework, a high-frequency trading firm in New Jersey. "It's entirely different individuals, and there's a lot of sour grapes as a result of that." Shafer now pursues a different life. He has traded his Audi luxury sedan for a Ford pickup truck. Instead of a suit, he now wears an industrial uniform supplied by UniFirst. Late last month, on a trip to New York, Shafer returned to his old haunts. He stopped by Bobby Van's Steakhouse near the stock exchange, exchanging a warm greeting with the manager and occasionally glancing out the window at familiar faces. A New Jersey native who started on Wall Street as a clerk in 1989, Shafer rose to become a governor on the stock exchange floor. The sale of his longtime firm, Lyden Dolan Nick & Co., to Van der Moolen in 2002 turned out to be well timed, Shafer said, as the business went into decline. □



Thomas Shafer, a former a stock exchange specialist with Van der Moolen, who was put out of his job by computers, near the New York Stock Exchange building in New York. The technology that virtually eliminated the job of stock market specialist has been the source of expensive, disruptive errors, including the "flash crash" of 2010, leading investors and regulators to demand tighter safeguards.

(Hiroko Masuie/The New York Times)

Now that technology was proving yet again to be a source of error. With the rise of computer-driven trading, a number of problems - including the "flash crash" of 2010 and the crippling computer error at the Knight Capital Group last year - have led investors and regulators to demand tighter safeguards. Last week, the Securities and Exchange Commission asked the nation's stock exchanges to introduce "kill switches" and other technological changes.

he left at the end of 2007. Having fled a dying business, he now works to reclaim a dead forest - running a startup company in Maine that makes flooring out of century-old logs collected from the bottom of the Penobscot River.

Even though he works in the remote town of Millinocket, Shafer still feels compelled to check the market every day. "I'm the only guy in Maine that has a BlackBerry," he joked.

The move to computers, of course, had benefits for

who is the chief operating officer of AFScott Technology Integrators, an information technology services company in New Jersey and a member of the New Jersey State Investment Council. "That saved them millions of dollars."

Through the 1990s, a group of firms with now largely forgotten names like Spear, Leeds & Kellogg and LaBranche & Co. enjoyed a central position at the New York Stock Exchange. In times of stress, it was up to specialists to

The dominant force in the market is now high-frequency trading. Such firms accounted for more than half of the shares traded in the United States last year, compared with about a fourth in 2006, according to the Tabb Group.

Even former specialists acknowledge that change was probably inevitable. William J. Nelson Jr., a former specialist with Bear Wagner Specialists, described the process as "Paul Bunyan versus the chain saw."